The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Robert J. McCracken

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RAYMOND E. BALCOMB 2 CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

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By Raymond E. Balcomb

THE CHRISTIAN

EVERY parish minister must face death with his people. One aspect of the ministry to those bereaved is the funeral service. Sooner or later members of every family are called upon to arrange a funeral and they are almost always woefully unprepared. It is a subject to which most people give little thought or consider morbid and unhealthy until they face it through necessity.

One of the minister's basic tasks, therefore, is to interpret the funeral service in a constructive, Christian way. He can approach the matter by answering three questions for himself, then finding a means of sharing his answers with his people in advance of their particular need.

First, *what is the Christian faith regarding death?* The answer as given in I Corinthians 15 is that death is an incident in life, a birth into a new and higher life, a transition from a mortal body to an immortal status, from the physical to the spiritual. The human personality, we believe, outlives the body it occupies on earth. Dwight L. Moody's autobiography occupies less than a page of print; this is its substance:

> Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of East Northfield is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now, I shall have gone up higher, that is all; out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal. . . . I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever.*

Such is the authentic Christian faith regarding death.

Earthly Dwelling Place

When Wendell Willkie died the New York papers carried the full account in such words as these: "Mr. Willkie will be taken to the church this noon from the undertaking establishment." "Following the service Mr. Willkie will be taken to the Pennsylvania station." "Mr. Willkie was in an open bronze coffin." "Wendell L. Willkie sped west last night toward his final resting place." The next day the editor of the New York *Times* received a letter from one of New York's great preachers, John Haynes Holmes, protesting the language used. Mr. Willkie, he contended, "played no such part as described in . . . several newspapers." It was not Mr. Willkie but his *body* that did these things, Dr. Holmes wrote. And the editor admitted this was true. As Christians we believe that each of us uses a body, and when it is outworn we leave it.

A second question asks, *what is the purpose of the funeral?* Primarily, we would say this purpose is to provide an honorable, reverent disposition of the outworn body treating it as a sign and symbol of the person, the form through which we behold a portion of God's grace and truth.

Death Is Normal

Another function of the funeral is to assist the loved ones of the deceased to accept the fact of death. Their own well-being requires that they accept this departure and not try to evade it mentally or emotionally. For death is normal; anyone who tries to deny it inevitably encounters this reality. Some people refuse to accept the fact and withdraw into a make-believe world after a loved one has died. They keep everything in the house just as it was before, and seek no new friends or experiences. This is abnormal. The funeral should help the bereaved ones to face reality.

Still another function of the funeral is to provide a means for friends to express their regard and respect. When the son of a professor was killed in the Battle of the Bulge, Pat McConnell, one of America's beloved rural churchmen, told the saddened parents, "I guess we're just like cattle in a storm—we've got to huddle together." What he was saying in that homely idiom is that we are social creatures: we not only need to stand by one another in times of crisis, we instinctively want to. We want to express our kinship with one another. A funeral ought to be the opportunity for us to do that in some small degree.

Furthermore, the function of the funeral is to provide an opportunity for the expression of the Christian faith. When Gandhi was assassinated in 1948, his funeral was an expression of the fundamental beliefs of the Hindu religion. Similarly, a Christian's funeral ought to express the fundamental beliefs of Christians. "See how these Chris-

*William R. Moody, *Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Fleming H. Revell). Used by permission.

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Pastors Are Responsible for Expressing the Christian Attitude toward Death

FUNERAL

ans die!" a pagan executioner once exclaimed as ıen and women became martyrs rather than sur-ender their faith. So today a funeral should be a ‘itness to our Christian conviction that death is a ateway to a new and larger existence, not the nal curtain on a tragedy.

Our third question asks, *how can a funeral serv-e best fulfill* its multiple purpose? Let me be very ractical and specific. The minister should en-ourage the family to keep expense to a minimum. here is no reason to spend hundreds, even thou-ands, of dollars for an elaborate casket, a massive ault or mausoleum, a lavish floral display, a dozen ired attendants complete with sleek limousines. hese not only fail to contribute significantly to ıe purposes of the funeral, they actually obscure nd vitiate its Christian witness in a pagan display f concern for the body. Why attempt to preserve ıe body indefinitely by chemicals, stone and ıetal? Unfortunately, subtle but great pressure ften is brought to bear on the family by those hose business it is to handle the mechanical de-ails of the funeral. But no one need be coerced by uch methods. Fewer people will engage in mean-ıgless display if they have been advised before-and.

Use the Church

It is best to hold the funeral service in the ıurch, for a funeral chapel is basically a commer-al institution not a place of worship. No matter ow much it may look like a church building, no ıatter how fine an organ it may have, it is not a ıeetinghouse, as our fathers called their church uildings. Always mournful and heavy with un-atural perfumes, it is a house of death, while ıe church is a house of life.

The casket should be closed permanently before ıe service begins. How pagan it is to stare all ırough a service at an open casket! The effect of ıe most devotional service can be lost if it is fol-wed by a procession past an open coffin. This ractice makes the experience more difficult for ıe family. There is opportunity enough to view ıe body before the service begins. This matter ıould not be left to the discretion of the under-aker. Rather, the family should be advised to nstruct him that they want the casket closed for ıe last time before the service begins.

Finally, the pastor should encourage use of the church's great music at funerals, rather than the cheap, sentimental, secular, subjective ditties that so often pass for religious music. "When You Come to the End of a Perfect Day" and "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere" are not Christian either in origin or meaning. Many of the so-called gospel hymns should be used sparingly if at all because of their excessive concern with self rather than with God and his purposes. "I Come to the Garden Alone" is not appropriate for a funeral; the "Hallelujah Chorus" is.

Perhaps the best way to sum up my advice would be to tell what I would want done if I were to be buried tomorrow. As soon as the members of my immediate family could gather, I would want my body cremated, after a brief private committal service read at the crematorium by a minister. I would then want it made known that flowers were not desired but that those who wished might contribute to a living memorial fund for the church or place a memorial book in the public library. About a month later I would want a public memorial service in the church. This would be a true service of worship using such hymns as "O God Our Help in Ages Past" and "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Scripture from I Corinthians 15, a prayer of thanks and dedication and a simple statement of the record of the birth, service, family and death of Raymond E. Balcomb. When you bury me let it be reverent, let it be helpful and above all let it be Christian.

Redemptive Fellowship

THE church must seek to be the kind of community which God wishes the world to become. By virtue of its calling it must act as a redemptive suffering fellowship in the form and manner of its Lord Jesus Christ. Within it differences of sex, class, nation, color or race are to become a source of mutual enrichment, and not of rivalry or antagonism. Its members must rise above the limitations of nationalism to a truly ecumenical outlook. It must carry into the turmoil of international relations the real possibility of the reconciliation of all races, nationalities and classes in the love of Christ. It must witness to the creative power of forgiveness and spiritual renewal.

All these things the churches must do as an essential part of their evangelistic task. But they can never be content with words. Through the life, service and sacrifice of their members, they must make their contribution to justice and peace, to the improvement of human conditions and to the care of the needy and of the refugee. They must serve humbly the needs of the less developed peoples. In persecution and oppression they can still witness to the spiritual freedom which their members enjoy, and which no human authority can take away. Thus they will testify, both by deed and word, to the hope which Jesus Christ has brought to the world.—*Second Assembly, World Council of Churches.*

By Robert J. McCracken

A Significant Sermon for Race Relations Sunday

Discrimination—The Shame of Sunday Morning

NOT long ago headlines were made by the statement that there is more Jim Crowism in America at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning than at any other time. Nobody can refute the truth of this assertion. It is a fact both shameful and shocking.

According to a recent estimate, only one-tenth of 1 per cent of all the Negro Protestant Christians in the United States are in "white" churches. Only 6 per cent are in predominantly "white" denominations, and of those 99 per cent are in segregated congregations. Relatively speaking, the number of whites and Negroes who gather together Sunday after Sunday for worship under the auspices of Protestant Christianity is infinitesimal.

The scandal of the situation is that the churches are lagging far behind other bodies in doing something about the problem. In education, politics, housing, the courts, employment, interstate travel, military service, entertainment and sports, a good record of integration is being chalked up. Paul Laurence Dunbar ranks high among American poets. Ralph J. Bunche holds a prominent and responsible position in public life and has been honored by numerous colleges for the distinction of the service he has rendered. Marian Anderson is established as a great musical artist. Jackie Robinson has made a place for himself with the Dodgers.

Centers of Segregation

By comparison, what has been the contribution of the churches to racial integration? In how many of the leading pulpits of this city has a Negro minister preached? In how many of the churches of this city are Negroes sought as members, officers, staff personnel? The shameful fact is that the churches, north and south, are among the most segregated institutions in America. They will have to introduce some large-scale changes of program and policy before they can regard themselves as democratic or Christian.

The influence abroad of this discrimination at home is bound to be damaging. Whether we like it or not the eyes of the world are on us. Inevitably our moral leadership in the East is associated with our attitude to our own colored minority peoples. Indonesians are apt to ask how we treat our Indians. Africans naturally want to know how the Negro fares among us. The Communists give tremendous publicity to our shortcomings in these directions. Judge what must be the embarrassment of American missionaries, preaching about the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the intrinsic worth of the human soul, when they are asked by their African and Asian audiences whether it is not a fact that the churches in America from which they have come are the last stronghold of discrimination and segregation.

God Has No Favorites

Do you know what we in the churches need to be reminded of? The great principles undergirding our Christian faith. Take this from the Old Testament. "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another?" That makes short shrift of discrimination. It is what our Lord insists upon: "When you pray, say, *Our* Father." The pronoun is not to be detached from the noun, and it is plural. All men are God's children; all without exception are the objects of his love and care.

A visitor to a Mohammedan mosque inquired what place was reserved for the Nawab during divine service. "What!" exclaimed the guide. "A place for the Nawab in the house of God? The Nawab and the beggar stand side by side." This is the Christian as well as the Moslem principle. In the presence of God distinctions of class and race count for nothing. God has no favorites. The Apostle Peter, who did not himself learn the lesson easily, who at one time practiced a rigid segregation, told Cornelius, "God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him." And what God approves, man dares not reject.

Creed and Deeds

On the racial issue Paul as well as Peter fought a long battle and would accept no compromise, for the gospel itself was at stake. Could anything be more emphatic than the words with which Paul sounds the death knell of the discrimination principle? "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

All this we know in theory. There are clergymen by the score across the country who preach it. At denominational assemblies, national and international church councils resolutions are passed advo-

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ating it. They call on Christians to renounce the attern of segregation as an open violation of the hristian gospel of love and human brotherhood nd to work for a non-segregated church and a on-segregated society.

Such pronouncements, like the sermons the lergy preach, have little appreciable influence on ublic opinion or, for that matter, on the attitudes f church members. You know why. They are not eally the honest convictions of the rank and file f church members but represent only a minority pinion. The state and federal officials to whom uch resolutions are addressed can assess the veight they carry and are not to be blamed for eeling that they can as a general rule be ignored r even dismissed as pious platitudes. The fact is ve don't live up to the Christian creed.

The principal—and deadliest—criticism directed against the churches is that they say one hing and do another. This was the possibility esus foresaw. "Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, ut he who does the will of my Father who is in eaven."

We might as well face the facts. We are not aking seriously the practical implications of the hristian gospel of the fatherhood of God and the rotherhood of man. Thousands upon thousands f church members in their attitude to the race uestion are fundamentally non-Christian. "The nind of the average American," says Norman ittenger, "whether he be a member of some hristian body or not, is very slightly touched by he mind of Christ. . . . Many, if not most professng Christians, are in no respect different from eople who make no claim to the Christian title."

Community Pattern

In our churches we are not only following the ommunity pattern of segregation, we are helping o perpetuate it; and while making some progress ve are trailing behind organized labor, commerce, ducation, politics, sports. It should be the other vay round. Christian churches should be out ahead f slow-moving majorities; instead they give the mpression of being wedded to the status quo. hey should be molding society; instead they are eing molded by society and making too little real ifference in American social life. They should be eflecting the mind of Christ, not the attitudes and rejudices of their communities.

It is not enough to *preach* the gospel and *adocate* the need of understanding, tolerance, rotherhood. The preaching and the advocacy ught to result in action, personal and concerted ction. Jesus insisted on the pragmatic test and it s the acid test. The value of what we believe and rofess is seen in what we *do*. "You will know hem by their fruits."

What is the remedy? Some are building their opes on legislation as the most effective way of getting things done. It looks as though legislation will actually be ahead of public sentiment in many quarters. What we need most is a radical change in public sentiment. For Christians this can best be brought about by a deepened faith.

Do we really know what it means to be a Christian? It means more than attending a church with some regularity and doing one's best to live an upright life. It means more than subscribing to a theological position, giving general and perhaps hazy assent to a number of traditional beliefs about the Bible and what it teaches.

The Remedy

Being a Christian has implications for daily life and conduct. It should mean that we are different from those who do not take the Christian name, different in our personal and social actions. For example, it should mean that we are not just sentimentally kind to people and concerned about their rights but that we are workers for racial unity, for genuine brotherhood, for non-discrimination and non-segregation because these things are at the center of our Christian faith and it is compromised when they are denied or ignored.

A deepened faith in church members would lead to a change of sentiment and disposition so thoroughgoing that it could fairly be called a conversion. Think of what a deepened faith did for Paul. Proud Jew though he was, it showed him that the gospel was not for his people alone but for the Gentiles also; that it was a unifying gospel, bringing men and women into a fellowship that obliterated all man-made divisions, restrictions and distinctions. Peter, before he understood the universal character of Christianity, proposed a segregation policy and wanted to withdraw from eating with Gentiles, but Paul withstood him to the face, for he saw that the issue was vital and that a policy of segregation would distort and pervert the faith.

How slow the church has been to follow Paul in the stand he took! But if, like him, we get a clear conception of the gospel of Christ, of what it has to say about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood and redemption of man, of its theological *and* its social implications, then our fundamental attitudes to people, whatever their class or color, will inevitably change and our everyday practices and our church programs and policies will reflect more faithfully the spirit of Christ.

Church Is Left Behind

Morally and socially the churches today are not leading the van of progress. The creative and constructive thought of our time does not proceed to anything like the degree it ought from those who start with Christian presuppositions. Reshaping the modern world are new vital forces which have scarcely penetrated the common life of the churches and which the churches are making

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barely any conscious attempt to guide and inspire. When young people look today for leaders and movements with the most insight and initiative, the spirit of adventure in the pursuit of moral ideals, it is not to ecclesiastical circles that they usually turn. This is our shame—our shame and our condemnation. We have failed the world which we exist to serve and we have failed our Lord whose name we bear.

Real Social Action

"You will know them by their fruits." The creed and the deed must match. The profession has to validate itself in practice. Real social action is required. Freedom from bias and prejudice? Yes. Concern for justice and the establishment of equal standards? Yes. Friendship between whites and Negroes? Yes. But we cannot stop there. Both at the denominational and local levels there ought to be racial integration in the Christian church. We must learn to work and worship together. Aggrey, that great Negro Christian, said: "You can play some sort of a tune on the white keys of a piano; you can play some sort of a tune on the black keys; but to produce real harmony you must play both the black and the white keys."

Basil Matthews liked to tell of a chat he had with the coach of a soccer team in a Syrian College at Beirut. The captain was an Abyssinian, the fullbacks a Turk and an Armenian, the halfbacks and the forwards included a Syrian, a Greek, a Persian, a Copt. The coach, incidentally, was an Irishman. Matthews asked him if he had special difficulty training such a cosmopolitan team and got an interesting answer. "A real hard nut to crack is just this. These fellows come from countries where the whole idea of team play is unknown. At the beginning of his football training each wants to dribble the ball down the field at his own feet and score the goal himself for his own glory. It is just the same if you are teaching them baseball or hockey. So I have won the battle, not only for the boy as a member of the team, but really for his whole life-job, *when I have taught him to pass.*"

Cooperation Necessary

That is the Christian philosophy. Paul might not have stated the case thus but Jesus would have appreciated the coach's way of putting it. We are all members of one team and must cooperate with one another. We are all members of one family with God for our Father and Christ our Leader and Savior. The body of Christ is one. Take away this unity in Christ and the heart falls out of Christianity. We can prove to the watching world that we are sincere about our belief in the one God who is the Father of all, black and yellow as well as white, if instead of reiterating glittering generalities, if instead of saying one thing and doing another, we will begin to practice what we preach.

BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE

A Children's Sermon for Boy Scout Sunday, by William R. Schorman

Congregational, Belmond, Iowa

THE first thing that a Boy Scout must learn is the Scout oath and the Scout law, and one part of the Scout law is this: "A Scout is brave." Now when a new Scout or a "tenderfoot" learns this law he usually thinks, "This means that if I see a house on fire and hear a young child upstairs crying for help, then I must be brave and run in through the flames and rescue him. Or if I am at a lake and see someone about to drown, then I must swim out and bring him in to shore. Or if I am going down the street and see a wreck, and the cars catch on fire, and the gasoline is almost ready to explode, then I must dash in and rescue the people who are hurt."

Yes, indeed, a Scout is brave.

But most Scouts become Second Class Scouts or First Class or even Eagle Scouts without ever having had a chance to be this kind of hero. They may be Scouts for years and never hear a child inside a burning building calling for help. If there was a wreck, someone else got there first or the cars didn't catch on fire. Or at the lake or swimming pool, there was a lifeguard on duty who rescued a girl about to drown. So how can a Scout be brave and live up to the Scout law when nothing exciting ever happens around him?

The answer is in our Bible. Jesus did not do any of the things mentioned above, yet he was a brave man. He was brave because he was never afraid to do what was right. One time he saw a big crowd of people about to throw rocks at a woman who had done wrong. Probably many a man there thought, "We shouldn't hurt this woman, but I had better keep still or they might throw rocks at me." Then Jesus spoke up bravely and made the people so ashamed of themselves that they became quiet and went home.

One must be brave to speak up when it is dangerous to do so, or to speak up when people will laugh at you or make fun of you. Sometimes even our friends will try to get us to do something which is wrong. That is the time to be brave and, like Jesus, speak up.

Yes, a Scout is brave, and so you must be if you are a follower of Jesus. The Bible tells us, "Be strong and of good courage."

The Prince of Life

By Harold E. Fey

RECENTLY a half million Protestants attended an Evangelical Church Congress in he communist-dominated East Zone of Germany. t was the largest religious meeting in the modern istory of that country, and it took place after ears of communist persecution of the church. While the Congress was in session, rains fell and ome of the sessions moved into the buildings of he Leipzig Industrial Fair. One night 10,000 oung people jammed the Soviet Exhibition Hall. heir organizations and leaders had been paricular objects of attack by the communists. But hese young people raised a great cross to chalenge the statue of Stalin which was already there. hroughout their service they chanted over and ver this refrain:

> We stand with Christ!
> He will not let us be destroyed.

This is the faith that will move mountains and verthrow tyrannies. It is the conviction that will urn the world upside down and set it right side p. For it is based on a true understanding of the ission of Christ and of our relation to it.

An Inescapable Choice

The mission of Christ is to present us with life nd to persuade us to choose life rather than death. hese German youth chose life as the free gift f Christ. They chose to stand with him, confident hat "He will not let us be destroyed." This was heir "faith tremendous"—the faith that overomes the world and even death.

Every man must make this choice. The Germans t Leipzig had an advantage. They stood in the resence of an immediate and undeniable danger hich made inescapable a decision we must all ake. But as truly as they, we too must decide etween life and death. The act of choice is the ltimately creative deed.

What was creation but an act of will, an exercise f freedom? Before there was time or space there as God. Read again the majestic poetry of enesis: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light!"

Darkness, formlessness, emptiness—and then an act of will, a divine choice, and the universe was born in a blaze of light. Day pushed back darkness. Form shouldered emptiness aside. Life conquered death. Purpose and spirit overcame nothingness.

The Artist

If this oversimplification seems absurd to you, consider the artist who is about to begin painting a picture. His spirit stirs restlessly, as the spirit of God moved over primeval chaos. The creative will in the artist is like a captive in a dark dungeon, moving back and forth to find a way to escape from extinction and death. Then the artist acts. He finds canvas and paint and starts to work. The doors of this dungeon swing open and the process of creation begins.

As he works his spirit is liberated. He is reborn. New life surges from his spirit through his body. He breaks through the inaction, the purposelessness, which ever seek to imprison the creative spirit and to destroy it. With excitement and joy his spirit soars in fellowship with the Creator. Soon something exists that never existed before.

The creative purpose in the artist is an easily understood symbol of life; the despair or depression which seeks to prevent him from creating stands beside it as the symbol of death. There is no doubt that the artist must choose between them, not once only but again and again as long as he lives. Nobody doubts that his capacity to create will die if it is not exercised, or that it will grow from strength to strength if it is intelligently and lovingly nurtured. Nobody doubts that this capacity is basically spiritual, born of the inner life, and that if it dies it leaves its former possessor a poorer and weaker person.

If this is true of the ability to excel in this particular form of expression, it is also true of other qualities of the personality, and of the personality altogether. They may wax or wane, grow or decline depending upon the inner purpose, the spirit. Taken together, they make up the complex thing we call life, personality, the human being. If this whole being is caught up in a purpose which transcends itself, it overflows with vitality. If on the other hand it sees no meaning in existence, it

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is bound up in spiritual paralysis and despair and it gives forth the mood of death. When the spirit dies the body does not long endure.

The essential problem in getting an unbreakable grip on life is therefore to learn to stand in the place where one is caught up in the purpose which transcends oneself. This is not easy. It is a little like the early physicist who said he could move the earth with a lever if only he could find a place off the earth where he could stand and place his fulcrum. Most of us know from sad personal experience that we can't get off the earth. Our purposes are often no more than good intentions whose fulfillment takes more persistence, more wisdom, more detachment, more will and courage than we can master. As a matter of fact, we seem to be provided with a built-in set of frustrations which mock our best laid plans and so often reduce us to humiliation and defeat. The pathetic "hero" of the play *Death of a Salesman* is akin to us all.

Rediscovery of Christ

It is just at this point of built-in frustration that rediscovery of Jesus Christ becomes so meaningful. His purpose was not to urge people to "get religion," as too many Christians think. It was instead to help men live. He came to point the way and *to be* the way to life. No better phrasing of his aim and achievement was ever made than John 10:10: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

A few weeks ago the attention of our city was momentarily stirred by the disappearance of a respected member of a suburban community. The police were notified and were looking for this sixty-year-old man when a suicide note was discovered. The search was redoubled, but no body was found. His family was almost prostrate with anxiety a couple days later when the man was found sitting on a bench in Grant Park. His shoes had been stolen as he slept. He had had nothing to eat for days. He had not touched liquor since his disappearance and had spent his time wandering around. All he could say was that he meant to take his life, that he felt "he was not getting anywhere" with living, that he was a failure.

His family took him back into their arms. They explained his action by saying that nearly a year before he had been abruptly dismissed from a position he had occupied many years with an Ohio corporation. He had secured another position, and a respected one, but the shock to his ego of dismissal had been too much for him. Finally worry set him walking, walking without aim except to seek extinction, only to find that even death eluded him.

What difference might the Prince of Life have made to this man? Christ might have given him a scale of values which would have helped him to appraise more realistically the worth of his former position, and his own attachment to it. He could have given him other interests in family, church and community which would not only have protected him from too deep an absorption in his business but would have made him more able to contribute to right human relations within that business. He could have given him more inner security, more endurance, more faith and love.

In addition, the Prince of Life could have helped this man to stand outside himself and to try to fit his life into God's purpose for all lives. He could have helped him to know forgiveness and to be reconciled with himself.

The Evanston Theme

It is good that the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches spoke on "Christ the Hope of the World." It is the world as well as the citizen of a suburban village that is wandering today, lost, dazed and stumbling toward death. William Butler Yeats expressed the feeling we all sometimes get, that the world is out of joint.

> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.*

Death takes many forms in our threatened, dying world. It rises up in science without social responsibility producing weapons of mass annihilation. When we betray our obligation to submit all our knowledge to the redemptive purpose of the mind and will of God, we raise up the means for the self-destruction of the race.

Death places its brand on art which obliterates all representation, all understandable meaning of form or design or color. The consequence is that fewer and fewer people even profess to know what is being conveyed, or why the product should be respected. So art becomes the creation of cults, the plaything of sophisticated snobbery, and the cults grow smaller and smaller, and more and more bitterly antagonistic, less and less able to communicate. And so art dies.

Hand of Death

The hand of death is trying to throttle literature. The plot disappears from the novel, the meter and meaning is lost in poetry, the sense of purpose in the story. Another cult of unintelligibility takes over. More and more people throw up their hands in despair and turn to the picture magazines and television. So literature goes the way of art, losing its capacity to communicate meaning because it has lost its conviction that meaning makes any difference.

We see the same gathering blindness, the identical drive toward self-destruction in politics. Here infatuation with nihilism takes on many forms. In marxism man is robbed of freedom in the name of economic determinism. "Freedom means being conscious of necessity," as the communist writer Plekhanov says. "I cannot disturb this identity between freedom and necessity. Such a lack of freedom is at the same time its fullest manifestation." So black is white. The necessity

*William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," *Collected Poems* (Macmillan, 1933). Used by permission.

s material welfare—not yours, but that of the nation.

This death drive takes another form in the opposite extreme of politics. The most violent foes of communism are also trapped into destroying freedom to save freedom. The manipulation of the people through systematic production and management of fear is not new in politics, but it takes new forms in this age. Death hangs over all the people of the atomic age, and people who can be frightened by death are easily panicked by lies, rumors, half-truths. So a new kind of terrorism is abroad, attacking statesmen, or generals, or educators, or bishops. Nobody in high places is immune. This is the death of free political life.

We do not need to ignore these manifestations of death to keep our hold on life. Instead we must face them. Communism is a deadly threat. Atomic war is a real possibility and threatens every life, particularly of city dwellers, for these new bombs are designed to wipe out even the greatest cities at one blow. Nihilistic art, literature, music are a peril. Our economic processes are unstable and we cannot trust our security to them.

Conquering Fear

Terror is all around us, yet we can live without fear. Death is a constant threat, yet life can go forward with joy and win daily victories. The central truth about the Prince of Life was that he conquered man's last enemy, death. Those German youth knew the score. Let us cry with them: "We stand with Christ. He will not let us be destroyed." Since all fear is at its root the fear of death, therefore he took away all occasion for fear.

We can choose life, even in the midst of an age of death and terror, but we cannot choose it on our terms. We have to accept it as the gift of God to those who *believe* in Jesus Christ. Facing the chaos and darkness of this life, it is necessary that we act, for willing to believe *is* an act. Confronted by the inescapable choice, we are compelled to use the freedom God has given to moral beings. We can refuse to believe, but this refusal is also an act of will, leading to waste of all the noble qualities of personality in confusion and fumbling blackness until opportunity is gone and we succumb to death. Or we can choose Christ and know the light that illuminates understanding and sustains life, here and hereafter. We can seize upon life in creative decision, and know the forgiveness and mercy of God and so learn to forgive ourselves and each other.

All around us we see the ways of death—anger, malice, slander and foul talk; immorality, cruelty, idolatrous greed and big and little lies. But all around us we can also see, if we only learn to look, the ways of life contending with death and conquering it. What are these ways? Compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, forbearance—wonderful qualities not yet obsolete in human affairs. Forgiveness, as God forgives, and love, as Christ loved us. The peace of Christ ruling in hearts surrounded by conflict; open thankfulness for the living reality of daily inner conquests of despair and doubt. Men who do their work heartily, believing they serve the living God and not men; women who quietly accomplish the impossible again and again through the ministries of prayer, of gracious persistence in faith and hope and love. "I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life!"

A Prayer for the City

By Kenneth D. Miller

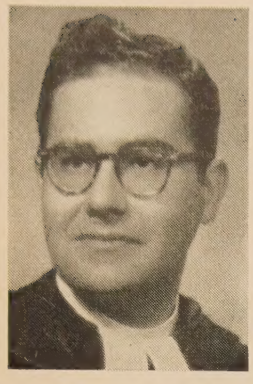
Former President, New York City Mission Society

O THOU eternal God who art the Father of us all, we lift our hearts in intercession for this our city.

We bless thee for all that makes it a goodly place in which to live and work. We thank thee for the way in which so many people of such varied national and racial origins live together in mutual appreciation and understanding. We bless thee for our homes in which the simple but fundamental virtues of kindliness and cooperation are nurtured; for the schools in which our youth are trained with knowledge and wisdom for participation in our city's life; for our industries and business concerns which with imagination and drive afford to so many of our people the opportunity to make secure the economic base for the good life; for the multitudes of public officials who serve us with honesty and efficiency; for the private and public institutions which labor to meet our physical, social and cultural needs; for the charities of the city which minister to the moral and spiritual needs of our people.

But we would also lay before thee, thou great Shepherd of our souls, the unmet needs of our people. We would pray for those who must live under conditions which make the creation and maintenance of real homes distressingly difficult; for the children and young people who are not learning the most important lessons of life; for the multitudes whose work is monotonous, degrading or uncertain; for those whose life is concerned primarily with the struggle for mere existence or in pursuing false or superficial values; for those who are indifferent to the claims of the church for the moral and spiritual undergirding of their lives, or whose adherence to their faith is but nominal or formal. We acknowledge before thee with shame and sorrow the deplorable sag in the moral standards of our people both in high places and in low.

O thou who art the lover of all men, look with compassion upon the multitudes of our city. Arouse within our citizens a new concern for the moral and spiritual welfare of our city. Make of all our churches centers which will radiate good will, righteousness and faith in thee until the city of our pride becomes the city of God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



First of a Lenten Series—
'The Gospel Inside Out'

Everythings That Are Nothing

By Theodore A. Gill

IN a day when even free people take many orders, no command is more familiar than the direction to "shake well before using." All day long, whether it is French dressing or cough medicine or white ink or hair tonic, we shake well before using. Behind each sermon in this series is the conviction that there is a sense in which Christianity itself must be well shaken before using.

If we want our gospel full strength, then we cannot let its parts separate. That means we've got to agitate our gospel. We don't want *either* faith *or* works. We want *both* faith *and* works; our faith showing us the work we ought to do, our work showing the faith that is in us. We don't want personal piety *or* social ethics. We want a private righteousness that longs for a better world, and we will do our best to build a better world, so there'll be more room for private righteousness. We don't want a Christian testimony given by our lips *or* by our lives. We want to witness to our Lord with what we say *and* what we do. Over and over again, you see, our Christianity threatens to fall apart. To keep it together, to keep it whole, to keep it from separating, we've got to shake it well.

Gospel Called a Scandal

Now I know no better way for doing this than by reminding ourselves of certain overlooked facts about our Christian faith. There's no better way to shake up Christianity than by shaking up Christians. Yes, I mean it—really shaking Christians. Jarring them, jostling them, disturbing them by reminding them of certain aspects of the gospel we often fail to notice. We've got to stop taking the gospel so for granted. We've got to get over thinking it's all so simple and plain and obvious. It wasn't in the beginning. It was surprising, novel, outrageous, shocking. It was called a scandal. People didn't sleep through sermons then because people couldn't guess what the Christians were going to say next; people couldn't predict what Christianity would claim next.

Our gospel is just as unpredictable, just as astonishing and unbelievable, just as scandalous now as it ever was. We are the guilty ones who have tamed it and toned it down and cut and dried it. We are the placid ones who have let the astonishment settle almost out of sight in the gospel. To get the exciting radiance back into all of Christianity, we've got to shake well before using. Or say it another way: we are the ones who have folded in the colorful side of the gospel. Now we've got to turn that gospel inside out to get it right side out at last.

Things That Count

Just think, for instance, what Jesus thought of the things that matter most to us. They didn't matter to him at all. Think of how he regarded the things we value highest. He had no time for them at all. The things that mean *everything* to us, meant *nothing* to him. Is there anything more disconcerting than that; could anything shake us more profoundly? Our everythings are his nothings. Possessions, prestige, power—those are what we live for, and even if we don't fight for them, we pay them the tribute of our jealousy. Not so with Jesus though; he had the chance to have them all, and he turned it down. He had a chance such as no one else ever had, with the winged legions of heaven and the forked armies of hell united to give him all he asked—and he deliberately turned them down. Early in his ministry he had to decide what he was really after, and he decided right then that what the rest of us are after isn't worth the effort. Our everythings struck him as nothings. That is the clear meaning of his wilderness dialogue with the devil.

Possessions, prestige, power: these were the temptations resisted. But why were they counted so little, these glittering, beckoning idols of the human mind? Surely they are the ingredients of the good life. Would not anyone be happy who had possessions enough at least so he had not to worry about food or clothes or housing? Surely we need power enough to be free and independent? Why then should Jesus have undervalued so radically these things that are so important to us? Surely he proved in his whole life that he wanted us well fed and clothed and housed and healed. Surely he showed us how important we are to him. Surely he wants us to be free. What then did he have against possessions and prestige and power as such?

Well, first and most obviously, he rates all those very low because they just don't last. They have no endurance, no stability. Jesus doesn't want us building our lives on things that can drop out from

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THEODORE A. GILL is the new managing editor of The Pulpit, who is introduced to readers on page 31 through the column "For the Record."

under. He doesn't want us chasing after things that finally go up in a puff of smoke. I mean, of course, that all possessions, all prestige, all power are checked at the gates of heaven. Though we smile when we say it, it is no joke that you can't take any of them with you. They are earth bound. Very little of any of them can go even as far as the grave with you. But what is worse, long before that final failure there may be intermediate failures. Even while we live, our possessions, our prestige, our power can vanish. And then what do we do? What do we do with a life focused on these everythings when they suddenly get away from us, disappear? What happens then? What point is there in living when the material points of our living are gone?

Possessions That Don't Satisfy

Dr. Howard Lowry tells the story of an accident that happened recently on one of the Florida dog-racing tracks. Mechanical rabbits, you know, are wound up and raced around the track to get the greyhounds racing in pursuit. One day one of the rabbits blew up, just disappeared, and the poor dogs nearly went crazy. The whole point of their existence had blown up in their faces. The meaning of their lives had just vanished into the blue, and the frantic, neurotic creatures just milled around, helpless and hopeless, crazy, mixed-up hounds for sure. These everythings don't last and so the saving Christ will not have us put our trust in them.

Neither do they satisfy. Necessary as food and clothing and housing and healing are, necessary as is recognition and authority, still if these are all we have, we have nothing. In themselves they don't satisfy. They don't meet our deepest needs. With them all, we can still be anxious and worried and uncertain and afraid—anxious about others, worried about the future, afraid of death. When it comes to our profoundest needs, these material everythings we're talking about can do nothing to help us or reassure us. If they could, then the rich and the famous and the powerful ought to be the happiest, most fulfilled, most confident people in the world. But are they, by and large? We sometimes think the lucky people living on Park Avenue have everything, and they do have plenty of the everythings we're talking about. But Park Avenue also has the densest concentration of psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychoanalysts on earth, and they're all busy. No one needs them more than the very people who can afford them best because they have everything.

History proves the same thing. There never was a decade in our national history when so much was done to get something of everything to everybody as in our own 1930s. That was the decade of enthusiastic social action, when concerted efforts were made to share the good things of the earth. And there never was a decade in which churches and cults got a better hearing. The material everythings evidently left out something the people were still looking for. You see the same thing illustrated in California, the Golden State, flowing with orange juice and sunshine; comfortable, convenient. And yet where is there a crazier, livelier bunch of cults than those invented and supported by those healthy, "sunkist" citizens who evidently are not satisfied with everything they have?

It is right at this point, I believe, that we Christians have the biggest bone to pick with the Communists. Oh, there is a lot about that business we don't like. We hate its blustering, its bullying, its bloody brutality—but most of all we hate its dirty lie: its lie that if everybody gets enough of the earthly everythings everyone will be happy. That is the deceptive, rotten lie: that these physical and social satisfactions are enough. They are *not*. If they are all any political party has to offer, then they just build to an awful letdown. For on the very top of the pinnacle of possessions and prestige and power the lonely soul will still want to have some enduring meaning in his life, some sense of companionship from beyond, some assurance about what happens next.

So said Thomas Carlyle: "Not all the Finance Ministers and Upholsterers and Confectioners of modern Europe—in joint stock company could make one shoeblack happy—above an hour or two." So says George Buttrick, too: "The famished Bedouin finding treasure in the desert cried, 'Alas, it is only diamonds.' Man in his deepest hunger always cries, 'Alas, it is only bread.' " And both, of course, were paraphrasing our Lord: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Perils in Spirituality

But now I want to give our Christian attitudes one last shake. So far, some of us may feel that we have not been jolted much by Jesus' re-evaluation of what the world thinks is everything. There's nothing new about that to us. We know how he feels about all that, and we try to feel the same way about such everythings. We try at least to keep those materialistic everythings in their subordinate place. Because we know that with Jesus, and so with us, it is the things of the spirit that matter most. If you want to see real, enduring, satisfying everythings, then look to earnest faith, and a sturdy defense of what we believe, and a generous life, and a spirit of self-sacrifice. These are the things that are everything to the Christian, aren't they? That's what the Bible tells us, and that's what we Christians believe.

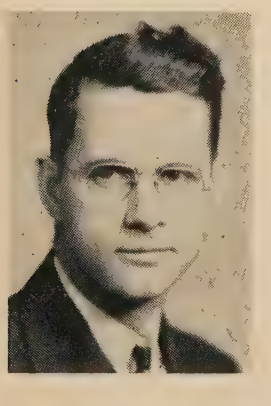
But now wait a minute. Is that what the Bible tells us? It seems to me I can hear St. Paul on this point. An earnest faith and a readiness to declare it—isn't that really what we are after? "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." So even that high spiritual everything can be nothing.

What about philanthropy, charity, self-sacrifice? Can there be anything higher? Is there anything more desperately necessary now than the

will and the way to give of ourselves and our goods for the health and happiness of our fellows who need what we have in abundance? Isn't this everything? "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." Even this—*nothing*.

How can the Bible look so suspiciously at what seems to us the highest and best in human action? You know why. You've seen the answer. You see what happens to faith and doctrine and preaching by themselves. Without love, ardent believers and eloquent witnesses create Inquisitions and burn heretics, and drown witches and get in the way of the quest for truth, and block cooperation among Christians, and break up and embitter congregations, kicking around the broken body of Christ in the very name of Christ. You know too what is wrong with philanthropy by itself. Haven't you seen gifts given that have hurt more than they have helped, wounded rather than made well, humiliated rather than healed, exalted the giver rather than raising up the recipient? You know what's wrong with self-sacrifice by itself, too. Who does not know the family in which parents have given up themselves, their very lives almost, for the advantage of their children, to educate them, to get them started. And who then have used their obvious sacrifice as a club, have tyrannized, dominated, dictated, crushed the life out of the family they claim to have served.

It's no good, none of it is any good by itself. Our spiritual everythings are like those other physical, material, social everythings. In themselves they are all nothings. To redeem them Christ calls us to certain nothings that mean everything to him. Christ calls us to things less substantial than possessions, less gaudy than conspicuous virtue. He calls us to something as invisible as repentance, as fragile as a right intention, as quiet as a prayer, as irresistible as love. It is such imponderables that weigh most with him. Of such perishables is his eternity compounded.



A Funeral Sermon

Conqueror of Death

By Edgar M. Carlson

John 11:1-44.

OUR text relates the story of how death came again to the house of Mary and Martha. It had come before. A mother and father, at least, had been taken on previous visits, leaving only two sisters and a brother. Now it had come again, taking the brother, the remaining breadwinner.

This is a story, too, of the fear of death. When Jesus reveals his intention to return to Jerusalem, the disciples are amazed that he would consider going back to the place where men have but recently sought to stone him. When his determination to go is clear, Thomas says sadly and with resignation, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

We too live in homes where death has come. Surely there are not many of us who have not within our memory had someone—grandmother, grandfather, mother, father, brother or sister—go to join the innumerable host in the silent halls of death. And for all of us, as for the disciples, death stands waiting, near or far—how near we never know. The story of death is the story of everyman.

Is death the end of the story—the blank page at the end of the book? While the story is being told and the drama unfolded, we may not be bothered by the blank page at the end. Many people convince themselves that death too can be ignored. Then death strikes their own family circle. Bereft, they are less confident that they can live one life at a time with no concern for the next one until they get there.

Fear of Death

When death comes, it seems quiet and still. It puts an end to action, to struggle and conflict. It appears to be impotence itself. But death is not really like that. It is a power that exercises dominion over our lives. Often it is a tyrant that holds us in its grip so that everything we do is done because we are men who die.

How different the concerns of our lives would be if death did not stand there as a limit to be reckoned with. Life insurance, savings, retirement provisions—are they not all made useful and even necessary because life, sooner or later, will move down hill toward the boundary which bears the

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name of death? The plans and goals which we set ourselves must all reckon with it. We would be foolish to ignore the one thing we know for sure about our future.

And those who seek to drain the cup of life's pleasures, they most of all live under the dominion of death. "Let us eat and drink," they say, "for tomorrow we die." This is no less true of those whose energies are centered in efforts to gain power, wealth, honor, prestige and glory. Men drive themselves to death in order to attain their goal before they die.

The difficulty is not, however, only that death is the limit of all we can hope to get from life. There is something more. Death is the place where everything is taken out of our hands. We can't do anything about it. We can't correct our mistakes or change what has happened. One might almost say that death stands at the end to remind us that the time will come when our future will be in the hands of God, incontrovertibly and irrevocably.

All of us move toward that day with unclean hands and impure hearts. How shall we stand before the judgment seat of God? This is the real sting of death, as the apostle Paul reminds us. "The sting of death is sin." More than we understand or will admit, this is what unsettles and unnerves us. It makes us want to ignore or even deny the reality of death. We try to escape thinking or talking about death, just as we seek to escape God. We face death and God together.

'Come Out'

All that I have tried to say was in the news of Lazarus that came to Jesus. It is in the news that came or will come to you about someone close to you. Indeed, it is in the knowledge that we shall all die.

But there is something else in this story without which this would be no text from which to preach. Here we learn that death has met its equal in Jesus Christ, the friend of Lazarus and of every man who dies, the friend of Mary and Martha and of all who sorrow over a dear departed one. Jesus stood at the mouth of that charnel cave where Lazarus had already lain for four days and called "with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The dead man came out." Jesus stood at the place where death had triumphed and challenged it to yield up its victim, and death bowed before its Victor.

Beyond a doubt, Lazarus died again. We know little of him except that he was alive during that Holy Week when Jesus himself met death and was laid away in another tomb. If he had lived long, it seems as if he would have entered the picture again, in the story of the early church. He received no great gift, only a few more days or weeks or years. But that is hardly the point of the incident. Rather, the disciples who were to remain behind, and Jerusalem which was about to destroy Jesus, needed to know that Christ was stronger than death.

The real victory was won at that other cave. There the words "I am the resurrection and the life" became historical fact as Christ broke the bonds of death asunder and was "designated Son of God in power . . . by his resurrection from the dead." The "glory of God," of which we see a glimpse in the raising of Lazarus, is fully disclosed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now men can see "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." There "death is swallowed up in victory."

The Real Victory

That changes everything. Death is no longer lord. It is not from death that we should take orders any more, but from death's Conqueror. Death, as the limit within which and in anticipation of which we live our lives and govern our activities, is replaced by Jesus Christ as the One who should determine how we live. It is folly to live as though death had the final word. The only true wisdom is to live as though Jesus Christ had the final word, for he is the Conqueror of death.

Nevertheless, death is not an illusion. If the Lord tarries, we shall all die. And the sting of death is still sin. Death is the place where life goes out of our hands and into the hands of God. There is something very final about death. We cannot take life seriously without taking death seriously. So it is right that in our provisions for this life we should take death into account.

As for the sting of death, my only hope is in the forgiveness of God. I rejoice that he who conquered death is he who died on the cross, bearing my sins in his body on the tree. This is the unbelievably good news of the gospel, that he who stands at the place of death, to judge the living and the dead, is my Redeemer who has taken away the sting of death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Only eternity will be long enough to render honor and glory and dominion and praise unto him through whose resurrection "we have been born anew to a living hope."

Christian Responsibility

THERE is a particular danger that nations will overemphasize the military aspect in their defense against communism and fail to see the need for reforms in political, social and economic institutions as an important part of their response to its challenge. These nations can have greater influence on the course of the present world conflict if they show their ability to deal justly with the legitimate aspirations of the dependent peoples, to cope successfully and creatively with their own social problems, and to remain self-critical.

It will be the task of the churches to point to the dangers inherent in the present situation: on the one hand the temptation to succumb to anti-communist hysteria and the danger of a self-righteous assurance concerning the political and social systems of the West; on the other hand the temptation to accept the false promises of communism and to overlook its threat to any responsible society.—*Second Assembly, World Council of Churches.*

When God Gets Us into Trouble

By Frank L. Hutchison

"It was not you that sent me here, but God." Genesis 45:8.

JOSEPH is one of the most fascinating characters in the Old Testament. There is something universal and timeless in the appeal of the Joseph story. Did it ever occur to you that there is an authentic Horatio Alger touch to this tale of the personable young man with great ambition who, through sheer force of character, is able to overcome all of life's adversities and in the end become a successful man of affairs?

The main events of his life are familiar to most of us. Being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, he eventually rose to power as prime minister of Egypt. When the terrible seven-year famine came, as Joseph had foreseen in the dream of Pharoah, Egypt was visited by great hordes of half-starved refugees from other lands. Among them were his brothers, the very ones who had sold him into slavery years before. Now the tables were turned. Now they were in his power. Vengeance was as simple as issuing an order that these men cringing before him were to be tortured and then killed. But Joseph was too big to seek revenge. He saw the hand of Almighty God in all that had happened. It had been part of God's design to have Joseph there in Egypt so that the lives of thousands of God's children could be saved. So he forgave his brothers, saying to them, "It was not you that sent me here, but God."

Profound Insight

This is a profound insight into life. Have we improved on it, even in 3,000 years? As Joseph saw things, what had happened to him was due neither to the evil deed of his brothers nor to the working out of blind chance, but to the operation of God's deliberate will: "It was not you that sent me here, but God." Just think what might happen to us today if we could see our troubles in that light. Dr. Charles Malik, U.N. delegate from the republic of Lebanon, is one of the genuine Christian voices of our day. Recently he suggested that in this time of great world tension, with wars and rumors of wars, we should ask ourselves this question: "What is God trying to say to us today?" Yes, and what is God trying to say to you and me through our personal tragedies? When we do not get that much-desired position, what is God trying to say to us? What is God trying to say to us in our physical suffering, in our anguish over a love affair gone to smash, in a heartache over a child gone wrong, in a hurt through a friend's betrayal?

When God gets us into trouble, we should seek to discover if our adversity might not be a blessing in disguise. A great Christian thinker once said, "The devout wise man wishes no stroke of adversity to be taken away, because he cannot know whether or not it may be good for him." You and I just assume that all adversity is bad, do we not? But what if God is trying to tell us something through it? Perhaps our particular trouble is exactly what is best for us.

God's Answer

A young boy once prayed to God for a new bicycle. When he did not get it, a friend taunted him because God had not answered his prayer. But the boy said with great insistence: "God did answer my prayer. He said No." It takes a very mature person to see that sometimes. Many of us just take for granted that what we want we should get and what we do not want we should not get. But what if we want the wrong things? What if we do not want the right things?

How terrible it would be if God granted all our requests, if children were given all the candy they ask for, if teen-agers were granted all the freedom and fast cars they wish for, or if women had their wish to stay young forever and would grow no older than a stagnant twenty-nine!

Most often we desire lives of ease, without effort or friction. But we should remember the lesson taught by a sign outside a place of business not far from this church. The company deals with brakes and braking, and so it is called "Engineered Friction." God has been making use of this idea in life for tens of thousands of years. Much of what you and I call trouble is merely God's braking action, holding us back, slowing us down, saving us from ourselves. You and I will wish to do a certain thing, but God apparently closes the door

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Is it not reasonable to believe that perhaps it was the wrong door for us?

If God blocks the road we are on, perhaps it means that this is the wrong road and we should turn around to get back on the main line. Paul had this workout in his life. He had been fighting the young Christian movement in the mistaken conviction that he was helping God, and so God met him on the road to Damascus and turned him around. Then later, he wished to go to Bithynia and so on to Asia to preach the gospel, but God closed the door and he went to Troas and across the Hellespont, carrying Christianity to Europe. God's No's made Paul a devoted servant of Christ and brought a new and vibrant faith to that part of the world out of which your forefathers and mine eventually came.

Opening Closed Doors

Wilbert B. Smith, former world service secretary of the Y.M.C.A., early in life lost a leg, yet with the other leg and a crutch he did many things better than most people with two legs. Because he had to try harder than others, to compensate for his loss, he made the fullest use of his powers and abilities. He became an excellent tennis player and a hard worker for Jesus Christ on three continents. He once told me that the leg he didn't have helped him far more than the leg he did have. God closed one door to Wilbert Smith, only to open many other doors all around the world. You and I should always seek to discover if our adversities are not blessings in disguise.

Again, when God gets us into trouble we should remember that the symbol of Christianity is a cross. The Christian church was born in tragedy, cradled in pain, suckled on adversity. Down through the ages, when Christianity has been cheap and easy and safe it has been weak; when Christianity reached its peaks, as in the Protestant Reformation and the modern missionary movement, it became costly and difficult.

Life is a struggle. As the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* said, you have to run just as hard as you can to remain where you are, and you have to run twice that fast if you wish to get anywhere. Life is an uphill struggle, not a downhill slide. You and I may rebel, yet we know that the struggle is worth while, that life is rich and fine, not in spite of trouble but even because of it.

Divine Resources

Finally, when God gets us into trouble, we should make full use of his divine resources. How we thrill to the story of a man like Robert Louis Stevenson. After he published his first delightful and hopeful books, a literary critic condemned them as obviously the product of a sheltered life. Said this man: "Let this exasperatingly happy person have one touch of rheumatic fever and he will quickly change his tune." Yet Stevenson, while he was writing, was suffering from sciatica, all but dead from severe hemorrhages, his eyes bandaged because of serious disease. But as he said, "I refuse to let the medicine bottles on my mantelpiece be the limit of my horizon, or the blood on my handkerchief be the chief fact in my life." Stevenson was one of those people who have learned that when God gets us into trouble he does not desert us.

The Christian faith holds that the more desperate life becomes, the closer God is to us. God is involved in all of man's tragedy. He cares, he yearns for us, he reaches out to us with comfort and healing. This is the message of the cross, that God is so much a part of all our doings that he himself went to Calvary: "God so loved the world that he gave his only son . . ."

Remember the story of the three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the fiery furnace because they held fast to their convictions. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Did we not cast three men into the fire? . . . But I see four men . . . and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods." This has been the Christian certainty down through the ages. God is with us in our fiery trials. He shares in all our adversities.

Rich Experience

Have you ever thought how strange the second Beatitude is? "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Actually Jesus' words are even stronger than that, for they might better be translated this way: "You are to be congratulated, you who mourn." Jesus is saying that one of the richest experiences in life is being consoled by God. Thus it is immeasurably better to have suffered and been consoled than never to have known distress at all. When God comforts us after we have turned to him we find, in a quite literal sense, "the peace of God which passes all understanding."

Dorothy Ballard has written these lines:

> Pain built a fence I was quick to hate.
> I clawed at the bars that held me fast.
> But when I learned to be patient at last,
> God took my fence and made it a gate.*

This can be the experience all of us can have when God gets us into trouble. Yes, even though we are enslaved as was Joseph or put on a cross as was Christ, we can still say triumphantly to all of life's adversities, "It was not you that sent me here, but God."

*Reprinted from the *Christian Century* by permission.

Revolutionary Methods

THE tide has been against the forces of freedom, but it need not remain that way. We can win the world for freedom and justice, but we can win it only if we use revolutionary methods. Notice I did not say military methods. It is difficult for us to dissociate great change from armed force, yet the greatest changes on earth have come without bloodshed.—*Robert A. Panzer, First Methodist, Sacramento, California.*

Living Sanely in an Insane World

By G. Ray Jordan

In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. John 16:33.

IT has not been many years since George Bernard Shaw said he was sure that our world is the one to which other planets in the universe send their insane. When most of us first heard this comment, we laughed. We considered it one of the facetious remarks of a unique character who had been permitted large liberties to write and speak as his mood directed. Now when we hear or recall this assertion, we do not laugh. If we smile, it is with the pain of sadness on our faces. It seems so true!

Certainly we are living like insane people. In a world where the food supply could be adequate and sufficient clothing is possible for everybody, most people are cold or hungry. In a social order where economic security is within our grasp, millions have little real security. In a world where there could be peace and blessedness for everybody, man is the only animal that organizes for the purpose of killing his young. At last we have perfected our scientific methods to such a degree that it is easy to dispense with most of the human race in a matter of hours. Minutes for millions, we say —that is, to dispose of them!

Mental Integrity

It seems foolish to talk of living sanely in such an insane world, does it not? Yet if we are to cultivate or regain sanity, the first requisite is that we face ourselves and our world with perfect candor. This is the procedure Jesus recommends when he frankly states that conditions are far from what his friends would desire. Quite candidly he tells them there is so much trouble it is necessary to refer to it as *tribulation.*

Jesus never suggested that we try to escape troubles in any way similar to that of Simeon Stylites who climbed a forty-foot tower in order to avoid evil. Rather, he insists we are to remain in the social order and make a contribution to it.

When Paul became a devotee of Christ, he caught and cultivated this same spirit of mental integrity. That is why he says that there is no need to consider the evil in our world until we face the inadequacies in our own lives. He urges his friends in Corinth: "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith."

A Greater Power

Just as soon as we understand our needs we will realize the desperate necessity of Something above and beyond ourselves. The more clearly we see our inadequacies, the more certain we are that we need God. Mental peace that lasts is impossible unless we find some Force that will hold us together. Indeed, sanity itself means what James Stewart had in mind when he said that the greatest need of modern man is some power that will unify him, make him "one." Disappointed in our world, frequently feeling that he will even be destroyed by it and by our fellows, we can keep calm by gaining the assurance that there is a Power that makes for righteousness and peace.

In his *Street of Knives,* a novel dealing with the life of Aaron Burr, Cyril Harris has vividly depicted this need for mental security. One of the friends of Burr is standing near the front of the boat on which a group are making their way down the Mississippi. At the moment conditions are most depressing. Hugh, the illegitimate son of Burr, strolls toward this friend Blennerhassett and asks if he has lost something.

Pointing to the handrail on which they were leaning, Blennerhassett replies that that is what he had lost—something to restrain him when he goes "too near the edge. It has to be strong . . . Men call it God."

Like Blennerhassett, millions today are looking for the same help. Indeed, unless there is a God the world doesn't make sense. Everything is crazy. Not merely we but the universe is insane.

All this was evident to Jesus. But he declares that it is possible for us to have security. "Don't be disturbed," he says, "don't be unduly alarmed. There is a God of wisdom and of power. To be sure, you cannot pull yourself together. But God can. He knows what it is all about and he is

---

G. RAY JORDAN is professor of preaching at Emory University's School of Theology, Georgia, from which he graduated before going on to Yale. Duke University bestowed the doctor of divinity degree upon him during his years as a Methodist minister in North Carolina. He was a delegate to the Edinburgh conference on Faith and Order, an associate delegate to the Oxford conference of the same year, and repeatedly a delegate uniting general and jurisdictional conferences of the Methodist Church. A prolific writer, he is author of numerous volumes and contributor to others, and has been a departmental editor for religious periodicals.

thoroughly capable of doing everything that needs to be done. Trust him. Give yourself to him."

Arthur Clough exclaims:

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That, though I perish, Truth is so:
> That, howsoe'er I stray or range,
> Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
> I steadier step when I recall
> That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

Power of Love

Peace of heart is also a requisite for sanity. It is just as important as peace of mind. I must not merely believe there is a deity; I must feel sure that in character he is like Christ. Even if there is a being capable of doing everything that needs to be done, if I can not know him as a friend, the power of his presence is not enough. Excruciatingly lonely, I become depressed and despondent. If there is no response to the hunger of my heart, eventually I may lose my mental stability. Loneliness has driven far more people to nervous collapse than all the theoretical doubts of mankind added together.

Creative power is always affected by the state of our *hearts*, as well as by the condition of our *minds*. For awhile we can force ourselves into activity. But this does not last. Unless there is the powerful motive of love to pull the best out of us, we soon tire of straining our nerves as we attempt to do what some prophets of righteousness challenge us to do. Not fictional, perhaps, is the story of the woman who was finally overcome with nervous prostration in church because the preacher constantly used the hymn "Rise up, my soul, stretch every nerve!"

'We Have Seen the Light'

Love keeps us going long after will power loses its driving force. Indeed, we never have inner security until we find something that responds to our deepest longings. "Children feed on love as they do on fresh air," declared D'Alba. So do adults! Love is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Browning is right:

> The loving worm within its clod
> Were diviner than a loveless God and his worlds.

Suppose then it is dark in this frightening hour of world history. We have seen the face of Christ. In the world we have darkness, but we are of good cheer, for the Light of God has shined into the darkness, and all the power of the black night cannot put out this light. Even if we do not see it in all its brightness, we know it is real.

A child was spending her first night away from home. The hour for retiring came, and she was put to bed. Good night was lovingly whispered by her aunt in whose home she was staying. The switch on the wall was turned and all seemed well. In a little while there were sounds of stifled sobs. The aunt came hurriedly and asked, "What's the matter?" The child said, "The room is dark." "Yes, dear, but you are accustomed to sleeping in a dark room at home." "That is right," replied the child, "but it is *my* dark in which I sleep." There is a tremendous difference between the darkness of night when we have seen familiar sights in the light and the darkness in unfamiliar surroundings. It is now dark, but Christ has lived in our world.

We may be unable to see clearly all we want to see, but the dependability of spiritual reality gives us the assurance which we so desperately need. One day at Montreux, Switzerland, some of us looked eagerly for the snow-capped mountains which on clear days the visitor views as he sits in front of any one of several hotels. The mist that morning was quite heavy. There did not seem to be any mountain before us. Then before the mist was the mountain. So, before the lights went out in our world there was the face of Jesus Christ. Even now, in spite of the blackness of the night, we can be sure he is present. Tribulation? Yes! It is foolish to deny it. But the power and love of Christ also are here.

Paradox of Life

We can continue to live sanely in an insane world when we give ourselves completely to those magnificent causes which make for decency and Christian character. To keep from going crazy, we must be *crazy* about something worthy of everything we have and are. This is one of the thrilling paradoxes of life.

We find exit from our own troubles when we enter helpfully and sympathetically into the troubles of others. Our chance to escape insanity is to get our minds off ourselves. Christian loyalty and love are much more than enlightened self-interest. But we are never more enlightened than when we are loyal to love for all mankind.

The path of peace lies along the road of pain in company with those who are forced to travel that way. God does not give us love to keep for ourselves; it is to share with the loveless and the unloving. We cannot shirk the cross. When we are truly saved, Calvary itself makes us eager to bear the burdens of others.

Unforgettable Service

The areas of life which seem to drive us mad are the very ones in which we must give ourselves to God with mad abandon. Consider the severely critical situation in America which Henry W. Grady faced. The very division of the country, the intense sectional feeling which followed the Civil War, the extreme depression of the south—all these furnished him with an opportunity to bring sanity to a nation which had been at war with itself. In downtown Atlanta, in the heart of the city, there is a monument to this great Christian. On its base is this inscription:

> Henry Woodfin Grady
> Journalist, Orator, Patriot
> Editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*
> Born in Athens, Ga., May 24, 1850
> Died in Atlanta, December 23, 1889
> Graduated at the State University in the year 1868
> He Never Held or Sought Public Office
> "When He Died He Was Literally Loving
> The Nation Into Peace."

No wonder Chauncey Depew remarked on hearing

of his death: "We forget all differences of opinion and remember only his chivalry, patriotism and genius."

Livingstone sought sanity in bringing light to Africa and in the urgency of his appeal to make others light their torches in the darkness of this black wilderness. It seemed thoroughly unreasonable—insane—to watch a ship lift anchor and move slowly over the distant horizon when he could have sailed home to safety. Instead, he turned to go back into the jungle with those black men to whom he had given his promise. He too was a gentleman! As foolish as this seemed, it was blessed sanity.

We are compelled to agree with the cryptic summary of our present world situation that now our choice is between *fire* and *fire*. It will be either the fire of insanity and destruction or the *fire of the spirit,* the baptism of God's fire on our spirits and lives.

A Minister's Tribute upon the 90th Birthday of His Pastor-Father

Tribute to a Father

MY brother Bill and I have had quite a chore bringing up Father. Not that he has been too obstreperous, but that he has had so many things to learn from his enlightened sons. Among these I might mention the following:

What to preach about.

What to *say* when preaching.

What to do with a handkerchief when preaching; that is, to keep it in one's pocket instead of waving it before a congregation like Old Glory in a breeze.

How to resist the urge to write poetry.

How to be a courteous listener to other speakers.

How to keep from reading certain low murder mysteries.

Sometimes we have wondered how in the world he got along without us during the early days of his ministry.

In the long run, however, we have realized that the things he has taught us far outnumber the items on our list. He has never invaded our right to personal judgment and never tried to force us to do anything against our wills. He has respected the integrity of our thought life and *that* is a star in his crown! He wanted his sons to enter the Christian ministry, but this happened with no prodding on his part. We have always known his displeasure—sometimes a whacking good displeasure—when we have done wrong; this was always counterbalanced by his vast approval when we showed some faint signs of intelligence or decency or courage as we were growing up.

Intercession and Thanksgiving

We remember the family altar in our home where faithfully and religiously he read the Scriptures. And then, as we knelt, he would take all of us, one by one and collectively, to God's throne in intercession and thanksgiving. Morning prayer and his blessing at table were a benediction on our family life.

He has served his country well in many ways, though his sons admonish him for being a bit erratic in his voting. He has met at least two Presidents—Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson—on missions to the White House. During his ministry in Port Jervis and Brooklyn, and for thirty-eight years in Youngstown, he was stalwart for righteousness and justice. He helped in the building of Christian neighborhood houses, social agencies, churches, Sunday schools, hospitals and a community chest. He preached to the working men in the mills, to prisoners and at Sunday afternoon meetings for the Y.M.C.A. His great love, however, during the forty-seven years of his ministry was for foreign missions. He preached Christian benevolence in season and out.

Humility and Strength

What a father he has been! He has watched four of his children grow up to found their separate homes. He built Windover, a summer home where his children could come to vacation and his twelve grandchildren could grow up under his watchful eye. And now, at ninety years, he is entranced with four great-grandchildren who will arise to call him blessed.

Yet withal he is a humble man, forever discounting his own achievements and encouraging his family to Christian solidarity, pluck and forthrightness. May his years increase! May he reap abundant reward for his labors! And may his prayers for the Church of Christ, and for his loved ones, be answered by his Heavenly Father!

We, his sons, may well quote those great lines from Tennyson, which Dad has always loved, as we join with you in honoring this lively man of God:

> Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are—
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

WILLIAM H. HUDNUT, Sr., marked his ninetieth birthday by preaching in Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York, where his son William H., Jr.—a Pulpit editorial associate—is minister. During the service a second son, Herbert Beecher, pastor of Detroit's Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, paid this tribute to his father who retired in 1937 after almost four decades as minister of First Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

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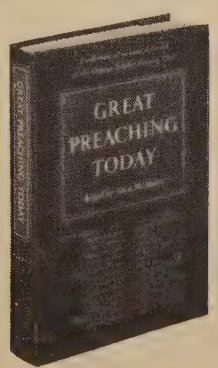

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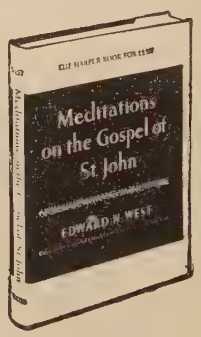

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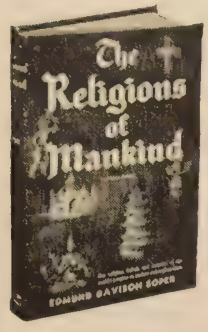

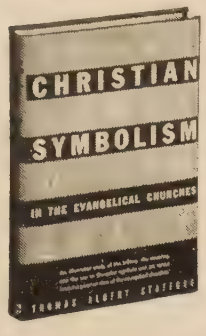

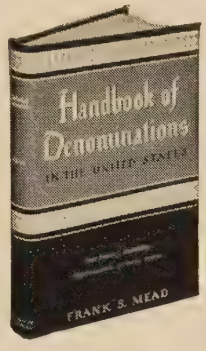

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Pulpit Post

A 'Shot in the Arm'

SIR: At long last someone has cast the beam of a flashlight on "The Sin of Gambling" (Jan.) I want to thank you for this enlightening sermon on a subject which I have heretofore been able to deal with only in generalities. I have attended some of our ministerial social action meetings on the problem, and found them insipid. They were "agin" it, but couldn't say just why, and that was exactly my own predicament.

If "gambling is the distinctive vice of this age," we ought to be more outspoken about it. Until now I haven't known just how or where to begin. How about you folks and the *Century* casting a few searchlights on this heinous issue? Dr. Clarke has given me a "shot in the arm."

J. WARREN DEARDORFF.
St. Luke's Evangelical & Reformed, Trappe, Collegeville, Pa.

Not Factual

SIR: John C. Irwin, in "Christmas Is Credible" (Dec.), is right in holding that much of the biblical material surrounding Jesus' birth is composed of stories that are not factual. He is right in saying that there is truth for the soul in these stories. He is wrong—in the last paragraph, headed "The Meaning of Christmas"—in teaching or preaching, like many ministers, as if these stories were factually true. Often this is done in such an explicit way that listeners of critical minds ascribe intellectual dishonesty or stupidity to the pulpiteers, and the truth-seeking youth—the idealist or perfectionist—finds no real home in the church. JOHN DOUGLAS.
Kintore, Ont., Canada.

Likes Enslin

SIR: I always enjoy Enslin's Pulpit Patter. His column in the December issue reflects courage, discernment and a fine sense of humor.

G. C. RECTOR.
Shell Beach, Calif.

Personal Preference

SIR: If Dr. Enslin prefers the term "meetinghouse" (Jan.) to "church" or "sanctuary" he should use it. But why make such a fuss about it?

HARRY S. HENCK.
Merchantville, N. J.

Appreciation

SIR: As one of your most enthusiastic supporters and readers, let me express my appreciation for the fine work Alton M. Motter has done as managing editor of The Pulpit. It seems to me he has done a magnificent job in the three years he has edited this magazine. It has come a long way in that period, and I continue

to find it one of the most useful publications that come to my desk.

EDWARD K. ZIEGLER,
Director of Evangelism.
Church of the Brethren,
Elgin, Ill.

SIR: Congratulations to Alton M. Motter on completing successfully a good job. FRED E. LUCHS.
First Congregational,
Evanston, Ill.

Local Ecumenicity

SIR: In accordance with your letter we have duplicated the article "Ecumenicity Must Be Local, Too" (Apr. 1954). Thanks for the permission to reproduce the article.

OSCAR W. SEDAM,
Executive Secretary.
Council of Churches of Redlands,
Redlands, Calif.

The Bulletin Board

Contributed by John C. Middlekauff, Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntington, Pa.

EVIL TRIUMPHS BECAUSE GOOD MEN ARE TIMID.

SO LIVE THAT AFTER THE MINISTER HAS ENDED HIS REMARKS, THOSE PRESENT WILL NOT THINK THEY HAVE ATTENDED THE WRONG FUNERAL.

THE BETTER OUR WEAPONS BECOME, THE WORSE OUR WARS.

COME TO CHURCH—EVERY LIFE NEEDS AN ALTAR AND A FAITH FOR TESTING TIMES.

THE TROUBLE WITH OPPORTUNITY IS THAT IT USUALLY COMES DISGUISED AS HARD WORK.

The Power of Fear

I WISH I could tell you that as we enter the second half of this twentieth century the feeling for freedom is running high in these United States. . . . Never since the days of the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798 has there been a time when freedom to think, freedom to inquire, and freedom to speak were in greater jeopardy. . . . We have no "thought police" here, but discussion, criticism and debate can be stifled by fear as well as by force. School teachers, government clerks and officials, and even businessmen, can be frightened out of their rights under the First Amendment as effectively as if that amendment were repealed. Of all forms of tyranny over the mind of man, none is more terrible than fear—to be afraid of being one's self among one's neighbors.—*Paul G. Hoffman.*

"I am the resurrection and the life"

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Ministry of Music

By Ernest K. Emurian

Letter to a New Choir Member

DEAR FRIEND: Choirs come and go, but the church "is of God and will endure until the end of time." As you begin your service as a new choir member I would like to make a few suggestions.

Your work is that of helping to lead the members of the congregation in worship. It is well to remember that you are still a part of that congregation and that you too are "standing in the need of prayer." Your task then has not ended with the singing of the anthem; it has only begun. That anthem should have developed a mood for the congregation and yourself in preparation for the sermon.

It should be unnecessary to remind you that the most gifted orator finds it almost impossible to compete with a gum-chewing singer, and that the fluency of the most talented preacher may be ignored because of a chronic wiggler in the choir loft. If *you* don't pay attention to the sermon, why should anybody else? Any distracting influence is out of place, whether it be a nod of the head to a comrade across the way, a smile of recognition to a friend in the congregation, a frown at a misquotation from the pulpit, a sneer at a statement with which you disagree or a conviction with which you take exception.

Attentive Audience

Let me wish you the good fortune of singing for a preacher who gives the rendition of your anthem the same rapt attention that he expects you to give to his message. If he frantically scans his notes during your singing do not return his rudeness in kind. By turning the other cheek you may win a convert!

With regard to the music which you will be singing, look not with disdain upon simple melodies. They moved your forefathers to seek the throne of grace. And regard not with fear the thrilling choruses of the great oratorios by means of which many have been inspired to nobler Christian living. While you may not always approve the selections of the minister or director, remember that the pastor is the leader in worship. It is your place to follow.

If you have aught against the preacher, director or organist, spare them the force of your fury on Sunday morning. It is difficult enough to pray, direct or play when one is in a good mood. After a "blessing out" it is well nigh impossible. So if you have any criticisms to offer, save them for the middle of the week.

In His Service

Seek not to be the leading soloist. God is served best by those who blend their voices with others.

Nor is the use of your voice in the service of the King a substitute for the tithing of your income. Here again you may set an example and be an inspiration when your fellow worshipers make their offering.

Make this your standard: let me take heed that what I say with my mouth, I believe in my heart; that what I believe in my heart, I practice in my life. And may God grant me grace so to sing his praises here on earth that I may be worthy to praise him eternally.

238 Years of Service

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There are some things so cheap, a good man cannot afford to buy them. Money is spent for that which is not bread, and labor is expended for that which fails to satisfy. No matter how small the investment, it turns out to be a total loss. A good buy is one that does not spell goodbye to the seller. Presbyterian Ministers' Fund claims that it gives greater value for the money invested than any other company. That such a claim has been proven may be seen in the number of men and women whose lot has been made easier by the Fund's ministry. Undesirability can become a heavy liability in an insurance contract. Avoid regret by writing to:

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Sermon Summaries

Were You There?

For Holy Week

By Wanzer Hull Brunnelle

Presbyterian, Allen Park, Mich.

SURROUNDED by the little band of his followers, the Master slowly rode up the highway to the city gate. Gradually a crowd gathered. Some were folk who had known him or seen his miracles in Galilee and by the sea. Others, never having seen him, had nonetheless heard of his fame. As the crowd went along it gathered momentum and enthusiasm. Some people threw their garments before him and others cut branches from the trees and scattered them in his path.

Were you there, in that crowd? What did you think and what did you cry? Why do you follow him now —because he is right or because you think he can do what you want done?

The Courage of Christ

On Monday he stood in the Temple, the central place of worship for his people, watching the money changers at work. Many people were there for the Passover season. They had been the victims of this racket for a long time. Animals for sacrifice were sold at an exorbitant price. Besides, a man could not buy with the money in his pocket, but had to exchange it for Temple currency. The charge for the exchange hurt.

Jesus watched for a while. He had long wanted to end this injustice. Then he drove the money changers out. He chased their animals from the Temple. Their money rolled on the floor and they scrambled to pick it up. The crowd shouted its approval. This was the kind of leader they wanted—one who would do what they lacked the courage to do.

Were you there, cheering him on? Were you saying to yourself: "I could not afford to clean up this mess; I would lose a lot of customers, for after all, I sell sheep to the merchants"? Do we still say: "The Christian church ought to put an end to racial discrimination, but *I* can do nothing; what would people think of me?"

The Teacher

On Tuesday Jesus was in the Temple teaching. The crowds were big in the morning. Now, they thought, he will call us to take up arms and drive the Gentiles from our land and set the people free. Now he may cause his greatest miracle to happen and all of a sudden, without any effort on our part, get justice for us and put the rich in their places.

Instead, he taught of the widow's mite and the importance of her little gift. He talked about the evil of being a hypocrite. He taught that in the judgment those who had been kind and shown mercy would receive eternal life, and those who had neglected kindness would not.

Gradually, the crowd drifted away. In the evening, only the disciples were left.

Were you there, at the end of that day? Or did you only stay with him as long as you thought you could get something out of him? Are you willing to *stay* with him, and learn his teaching so that you might become his co-worker for God?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Thursday night, our Lord struggled in prayer. He prayed that he would not have to go through the crucifixion —and yet prayed that he would have the strength to do God's will.

James and John and Peter were with him at the edge of the garden. He had left them, urging them to pray also. But they went to sleep. Again and again he returned, wakened them and urged them to pray. Again and again they fell asleep. Then Judas brought the soldiers to arrest him.

Were you there, under the olive trees? In the crisis, do we just shut our eyes to the needs of a friend in agony and escape into mental slumber?

On the Cross

On Friday, Jesus hung on the cross at Golgotha. There were the Roman soldiers who had crucified him. There were the rulers of the Temple who were satisfied that they had really put him out of the way. There was the crowd that hated him for refusing to be the kind of a king they wanted. There were the curious, fascinated to watch a man's death agony. There were the thieves, repentant and unrepentant. There were a few faithful women: Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James and Joseph; the mother of John and James; the mother of Jesus. There was one disciple.

Were you there, when they crucified my Lord? Or had you run for hiding like the rest of the disciples? Had we, scared for our own lives, cried loudly like Peter that we had never known the man? Or were we there, driving in the nails, because we were employed to do it, and saying that after all we had to do what we were paid for?

This Friday, will we morbidly watch at the cross out of curiosity, or will we let Christ's love break down every barrier of fear and selfishness within our hearts?

Darkest Hour

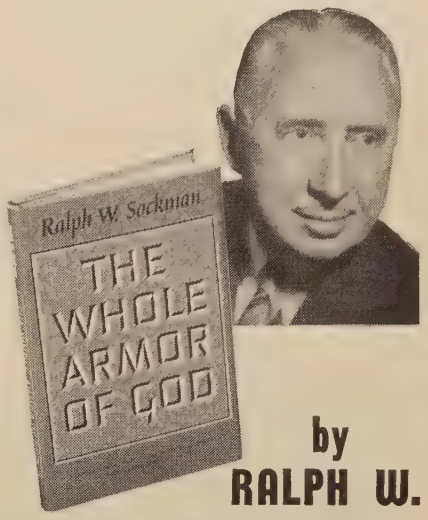
On Sunday morning the lone figure of a young woman walked through the burial ground where in the setting of a garden Joseph of Aramathea's tomb was carved out of the rock.

There, Jesus' body had been reverently laid. The young woman, Mary

A CHRISTIAN'S MANUAL OF ARMS

THE

WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD



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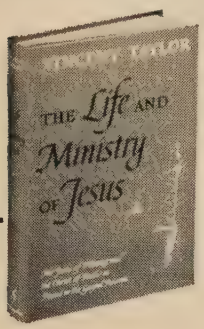

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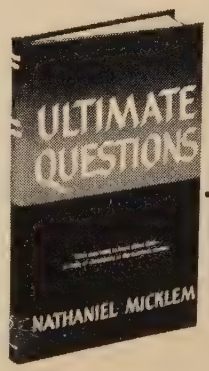

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Why Preach Christ Crucified?

By Harry W. Foot

St. Cloud Presbyterian, West Orange, N. J.

WHY preach Christ crucified? Because we need to be reminded that small sins grow into large ones; that the way of the true Christian is not easy or smooth. Because we need to be warned constantly of what can happen to honest, just, prophetic men and women in a militaristic state such as Palestine was under Rome. Because we need to be reminded of what can happen in a nation which permits church and state to use each other for narrow, selfish, cruel ends.

Why preach Christ crucified? Because any fair-minded observer knows that periodically we need this damning indictment of human wickedness. Because the cross can help us face the whole truth about humankind.

What has Pearl Harbor come to mean to you? An unfortunate naval engagement combining administrative carelessness with the treachery of a war-minded ruling party in Japan? Yes, it is all of that, but it was only another explosion of a world system in which might and power had the last word. Was Hiroshima the opening deed in the new atomic age? Far from that. It was a declaration on our part that we had the new weapon first and we wanted all potential enemies to know it. Buchenwald? It sticks in our minds as the symbol of all the evil we connect with nazi Germany. Would that we could dismiss it as representing only the sins of the leaders—the Hitlers, Goebbels, Himmlers and the rest. But that wasn't the whole truth. Just as our Lord was crucified, in part, by the "little people" who stood by and did nothing, so were thousands of Jews executed because the "little people" turned their eyes away, lacked the courage to learn what was going on in their national life, or were so pleased with job security under the nazis that they couldn't bring themselves to criticize.

Milton Mayer has written for *Harper's* a study of ten "little" Germans —a tailor, his apprentice, a cabinet-maker, a bill collector, a baker, a policeman, a teacher, a university student, a salesman and a bank clerk. One man alone, the teacher, saw nazism as we saw it. The other nine did not know at any time that it was evil. They do not know it now. They lived under it, served it, made it, but never saw anything repressive in the system, much less anything of tyranny which degraded all it touched. So profound was their ignorance that a Jewish girl, watching a nazi parade in a movie, said to her mother: "If I

ɛren't a Jew, I think I'd be a nazi." When a political minority can fool e most intelligent minority in ırope's best-educated country, what n be done by like-minded men in any untry, including our own—unless . Unless what? Unless the meaning Christ crucified becomes unmistakly clear to all men everywhere; lless all recognize that through ırist's sacrifice man can be redeemed d set free again to put the pieces the world together.

We must preach Christ crucified, r that alone is an adequate testaent to God's faith in us after such story of human cruelty as our 20th ntury has written.

The End of Tears

A Funeral Meditation by Gary Bousman

First Congregational, Alexandria, Minn.

ON a certain college campus there is a marble bench presented by graduating class of a previous year. ngraved on it is this inscription: o those who sit here rejoicing and those who sit here lamenting; greetgs and sympathy. So have we done our time."

One can imagine a student stopping rest on the bench. Perhaps he has st received some honor. As he walks vay from the bench, still elated, he rns around and reads the inscription d he knows that his experience has en shared by others who have gone fore him.

Next comes a student who has sufred disappointment. He has failed examination or has lost a friend. hile he sits there in the midst of his rrow he happens to turn around and ad the inscription. And now he feels tter because he knows that his expeence is not a new one in the history mankind. He is comforted by the mpathy of those who have gone fore him.

Our mood today may be a mixed e. In the midst of our lamenting we n rejoice that a noble companion s shared life with us. Death cannot stroy the memories that gather out this life. We can also be thankl for the fact that this is the release om suffering, the end of pain so far our honored one is concerned. Death ings its sorrow and disappointment, t it also brings relief from sufferg. In the book of Revelation we ad:

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more;
the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water;
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Today we can also be thankful for e assurance of faith. We may pass

(Continued on page 27)

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

"The Sin of Preoccupation." I Kings 20:40—"*And as your servant was busy here and there, he was gone.*"

ARTHUR V. BOAND.
Highland Park Presbyterian,
Dallas, Texas.

• • •

"Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained." Matt. 24-25—"*He also who had received the one talent came forward saying, 'Master . . . I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground.'*"

NORMAN DONALD NEWMAN.
Methodist,
Jeffersonville, Ohio.

• • •

"Lonely Man and a Friendly God." John 15:15—"*I have called you friends.*" GRAHAM R. HODGES.
First Congregational,
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Pulpit Patter

By Morton S. Enslin

More for the Index

FROM time to time in this column I have mentioned words whose inclusion in a modern *index expurgatorius* would not cause me sorrow. But —to continue in the language of Zion —"yet there is room." So I hasten to suggest another word which I would like removed from circulation for a season. That word is "humble."

Humility is a virtue. I have, in fact, strenuously endorsed it in occasional writings and—less frequently—in sermons. But I must confess that I am enough of a Greek to feel that there are other qualities more foursquare and honest. Undue self-depreciation, even if sincere, is not factual; far too frequently it is downright dishonest. This suggests to me the old gentleman, well known in the sagas of hymnody, who refused to sing the line of the old gospel song "O what a worthless worm am I," but boomed out instead, "O what a worthful worm am I." He may not have found the ideal solution, but at least he avoided one pitfall.

Delightful Pages

It may be that recent converse with Uriah Heep—yes, I confess that for me Dickens never grows old—has made me extra aware of what " 'umble" is and isn't. But I am sure that without those delightful pages I should sooner or later have found my little cup full to overflowing with clerical "humbles."

A swirl of theology, especially gusty at the moment, has decided that the core of its *kerygma* for today has to do with a quality denominated "pride." Pride, we are told, is a very bad disease, more contagious than measles, more disfiguring than mumps. In short, it is *the* sin, *the* quality which destroys us.

Actually, pride leads us to dare to quest for the One we used to call Father, to believe that without our love and devotion, our hands and heart, it is idle to petition the coming of his Kingdom. But now we hear that all this is little short of blasphemy, a clear indication of our sinful pride. We are told not to seek to find him—the New Testament must be wrong at this point. Instead, we are to wait in humility until the Altogether Other—not a heart-warming term—deigns to find us.

Far be it from me to raise captious queries. All this must be correct, for the unassuming, lowly and humble dispensers of the recently rediscovered, pristine gospel modestly and self-effacingly set it forth in season and out. Still I must confess to some small doubts.

Personal Observations

For a good many years I have had reasonably close contact with theological students and their preceptors in many schools. My own observation, confirmed by many fellow teachers, makes one point very clear: regularly there comes a cleavage in an erstwhile reasonably tranquil, if amorphous, student body, as soon as this new elixir against pride becomes a part of the theological pharmacopoeia.

The devotees of the new gospel of humility, in their campaign against the sin of pride, seem "humbly" sure that they and they alone are Christian and that all others are hopelessly outside the pale. As I see them, leaders and led alike, I still believe—as apparently Jesus did—that men, like trees, are to be judged by their fruits. I find it hard not to have Tom Towers step forth from the pages of *Anthony Trollope*—Tom who "walked on from day to day, studiously striving to look a man, but knowing within his heart that he was a god."

Unconscious Humility

It all reminds me of a story told us in a New Testament class more than 30 years ago by that departed warrior, Frederick Lincoln Anderson. The good doctor was reporting a sermon which he had preached some time before. Its subject, he told us, was "Humility"; its proposition, that the truly humble man is never aware of his humility. I can still hear my beloved preceptor's voice as he said: "And I hadn't reached the door when one of the women came up to me to gush, 'O Dr. Anderson, your sermon was such a comfort to us humble ones!' "

Enough has been said, but I must append a wistful coda. How I wish preachers—many of them honest men who have not been inoculated with the prevalent theological virus but who with unflagging zeal use the meaningless adjective "humble": "in my humble judgment," "we bring our humble gifts," *ad nauseam*—how I wish they would give the word, and us, a rest.

Sermon Summaries

(Continued from page 25)

st of our days alternating between rk and play, joy and sorrow. But en a life begins or ends our oughts turn from the job of finding od, clothing and shelter. The spiral realm suddenly becomes real and r thoughts are directed toward the st significant questions.

Big Fisherman's Brother

By Claude W. Warren

Congregational (retired), Redondo Beach, Calif.

MUCH has been said and written in recent years about Peter, the g Fisherman. His brother Andrew not so well known or appreciated. ter was a great preacher and ornizer. Andrew, if living today, ould make an ideal layman.

Andrew never became a great eacher like Peter and Paul. He ver wrote a book. He was always e humble lay worker, introducing ople to the Master. He is remembered for three occasions on which he ought someone to the Master's service.

The first of these men was his own other Simon, later known as Simon ter, the Big Fisherman, whose name always mentioned first in the list the twelve disciples. "We have und the Messiah," said Andrew his brother. Years later Peter reached a sermon which won 3,000 llowers to Christ. How Andrew ust have rejoiced!

On the second occasion Andrew rought to the attention of the Master a young lad with a lunch basket containing five barley loaves and two fish. It is said that Jesus gave thanks for the gift and with it began his ministry to the multitude. However we interpret this story, it teaches that modern man must share his skill and material blessings with those less fortunate. Also, Andrew was interested in boys —a prototype of the good scoutmaster.

On another occasion Andrew brought to the Master some Greek pilgrims who were seeking someone to give them the meaning of the abundant life. Andrew sensed the hunger in the heart of his neighbor and longed to be the human agency of satisfying that need. He was always helping people over the hard places on the road of life. Like Great Heart in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, he was the strong man who helped the weak.

Such a layman in any church brings joy to the pastor's heart. We need more men like him. If living today, Andrew would agree with Carl Sandburg that the worst word in the language is "exclusive." He would feel that the best word is "integration," bringing together the parts into the whole. This is humanity's need in the atomic age. Who will promote the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew?

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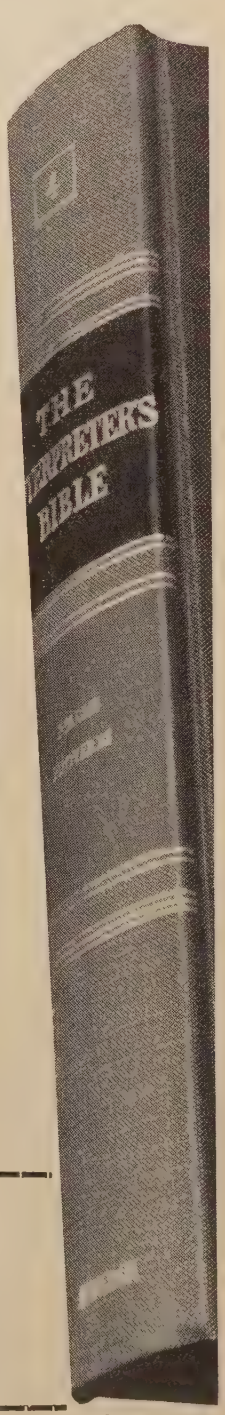

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Pulpit Paragraphs

Contributed by Readers of The Pulpit

• *Who Is My Brother?*

A STORY is told of a man who was standing among the "sidewalk superintendents" watching as a great excavation was being made in one of our large cities. Suddenly the work stopped, the power shovels became idle, and the man noticed that a great slide of earth in one corner had buried some of the workmen. He watched now with keener interest, hoping that the men would be released before they suffocated, but he still remained on the sidewalk. Then someone touched his arm and said, "John, did you know that one of the men buried down there is your brother?" At that moment something happened to change that man. He left the sidewalk, hurried down into the excavation and, throwing off his coat, worked harder than anyone else to pull the dirt away from the threatened men. Why? Simply because he had established a relationship of responsibility to someone who was in need. It was his *brother!* Christianity does something like that for our individualism. It establishes a new relationship for human life.—*Hugh B. Fouke, Director, Wesley Foundation, University of Minnesota, Duluth Branch.*

• *No Royal Road to Glory*

ONCE there was a Man who proved that there is no royal road to glory. "He saved others; himself he could not save." Can this dog-eat-dog, armament-race, hate-breeds-hate existence never end in any way except that? "Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins." Can we follow Christ, who chose that way, by going in a different path? Would we go down in apparent defeat as he did, only to rise again with new life and hope for all the world? Is life really found by losing it?—*Dale S. Bringman, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Harrisburg, Pa.*

• *Architect or 'Sidewalk Superintendent'?*

HAVE you ever stood by to watch a building being erected? It is one of the most interesting of American pastimes. To watch piling being driven into the ground, to see brick masons at work, to see riveters on steel beams—these are some of the fascinating sights in any building enterprise. This great American pastime of watching others build has produced a strange type of individual—the "sidewalk superintendent."

In every building enterprise there is another person without whose efforts the "sidewalk superintendent" would be completely unknown. He is the architect. His tasks are exacting, skillful and essential. For he must visualize the finished structure, with its sturdiness and usefulness, and transfer this vision to the blueprints that workmen will follow. He must be available to supervise, guide and direct activities in order to assure that his vision will become concrete in form and not remain simply an empty vision.

Now these two types of persons are not limited to the field of building construction alone. In almost every area of life you can find on the one hand the man who visualizes, designs, constructs, and on the other hand the man who watches, comments, criticizes. —*Edwin L. Brock, First Methodist, Church Point, La.*

Pulpit Calendar

Jan. 30-Feb. 6—Youth Week.
Feb. 6—5th Sunday after Epiphany.
Feb. 13—6th Sunday after Epiphany. Race Relations Day.
Feb. 20.—7th Sunday after Epiphany. Day of Prayer for Students.
Feb. 20-27—Brotherhood Week.
Feb. 23—Ash Wednesday.
Feb. 25—World Day of Prayer.
Feb. 27—1st Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 6—2nd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 13—3rd Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 20—4th Sunday in Lent.
Mar. 25—The Annunciation.
Mar. 27—Passion Sunday.
Apr. 3-10—Holy Week.
Apr. 3—Palm Sunday.
Apr. 8—Good Friday.
Apr. 10—Easter.
Apr. 17—1st Sunday after Easter.
Apr. 24—2nd Sunday after Easter.

(Pulpit Calendar lists dates in the calendar of the Christian year and other observances of national or religious significance.)

• *The Spirit of True Brotherhood*

DURING World War II three escaped prisoners, one seriously wounded, found refuge with an aged priest in a tiny French parish church. When the injured man died, his friends asked the priest to bury their comrade in the cemetery that adjoined his church. Because the dead soldier had been a Protestant, the white-haired holy man sadly shook his head. Only Catholics could be laid to rest there. Then he brightened. "We can put him yonder, just outside the fence," he suggested. And it was done.

The next morning, as the two soldiers made a farewell visit to the grave, a strange sight met their eyes. During the night the fence had been moved to include the grave of their dead comrade. As they looked, the priest came along, a smile on his face, and said, "A Protestant may not be buried in the cemetery, but there is no rule which says we cannot move the fence to include the Protestant." Surely such is the spirit of true Christian brotherhood.—*C. W. Vandenbergh, First Baptist, Brattleboro, Vt.*

• *The Test of Political Negotiations*

NEGOTIATIONS will become increasingly effective as people outgrow the popular tendency to think in terms of a diplomatic victory. A diplomatic defeat almost inevitably gives rise to another diplomatic controversy. The test to be applied in appraising the result of negotiation lies not in the extent to which a government's original position has been sustained, but rather in the degree to which a much needed solution has been advanced to the point where it can command sufficient support of all parties concerned to move competition toward cooperation.—*O. Frederick Nolde, before the World Council's Second Assembly.*

• *Our Need of One Another*

A COUNTRY doctor told of a rancher's wife who was his patient. Her husband was one of those seemingly strong and robust men who are taciturn and not given to compliments. His wife, always frail, suffered a ruptured appendix. She was rushed to the hospital where the doctor operated successfully. But the woman grew steadily weaker in spite of transfusions and all the care that money could buy. The doctor told her, "I thought you were going to be strong like your husband." But she replied, "John is so strong he doesn't need me."

That night the doctor told her husband that Louisa did not want to get well. "She's got to get well," he said. "How about another transfusion?" The rancher's blood proved to be the same type as his wife's, and the transfusion was begun. As the husband lay there, his blood flowing into his wife's, he said, "I'm going to make you well." "Why?" she asked, and he replied, "Because I need you." "You never told me," she said, but her pulse began to get stronger; and though she was still very sick, the doctor knew she would get well. Writing of the incident later, the doctor said, "It wasn't the transfusion—it was what went along with it."—*Bertram de Heus Atwood, First Presbyterian, Englewood, N. J.*

Books in Brief

★★EVANSTON: AN INTERPRETATION. **James H. Nichols.** 155 pages. Harper, $2.00. Here is the story of the World Council of Churches' Second Assembly as seen through the eyes of one of America's younger church historians. Prof. Nichols places the Evanston meeting in its larger historical perspective. His insights are especially helpful in describing the churches represented at Evanston as well as "those who were not there." This first American book on this significant assembly offers an invaluable evaluation to the preacher who seeks a better understanding of the ecumenical movement as it is now developing on the world front and who has been looking forward to such an interpretation to enrich his thinking and preaching in this field.—*Alton M. Motter, Executive Director, Chicago Sunday Evening Club.*

★★MODERN CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS. By **John T. McNeill.** 197 pages. Westminster Press. $3.50. This book's six chapters cover English Puritanism, German pietism, the evangelical movement, Anglo-Catholicism, the ecumenical movement and modern Roman Catholicism. Vivid and succinct, these surveys bring to the reader a handy distillation of many volumes. For ready reference in the preparation of sermons and addresses the book will be permanently valuable.—*Ernest Marshall Howse, Bloor Street United, Toronto, Canada.*

SENT FORTH TO PREACH, STUDIES IN APOSTOLIC PREACHING. By **J. B. Weatherspoon.** 182 pages. Harper, $2.50. This is one of the best recent books on the subject by the professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Weatherspoon shows complete familiarity with the whole field of New Testament scholarship and uses his knowledge effectively to point out the major message that such scholarship has for the modern preacher. He presents a study of the Christian ministry and the task of preaching that is both informative and challenging. For example, observe his excellent discussion on the nature of preaching as disclosed in the New Testament: preaching is *talking* face to face, *bearing witness* to good tidings, *prophesying* as the Spirit gives light, *teaching* divine truth and *exhorting*. The author clearly points out that no matter how significant an event may be, it is never effective until it is proclaimed. "An event is *established* by happening; it becomes generally known, *lives and works* by being proclaimed . . . the gospel is *fact received and told.*" This volume is as good as some in the Yale lectures on preaching, and better than many.—*Millyer H. Straton, First Baptist, Malden, Mass.*

WHEN STONES HURT YOUR FEET. By **Karl H. A. Rest.** 104 pages. Muhlenberg Press, $1.50. Deploring the use of "cute stories with a moral tacked on the end," this collection of 26 sermons intended for juniors demonstrates one pastor's effort to preach to children. Every minister knows that good children's sermons are hard to come by. These sermons probably cannot be used by others seeking aid on a Saturday night, but they are examples of one man's earnest endeavor to work in a barren area.—*Merl Schiffman, Bethel Evangelical and Reformed, Elmhurst, Ill.*

★BIOGRAPHICAL PREACHING FOR TODAY. By **Andrew W. Blackwood.** 224 pages. Abingdon, $3.00. The idea for this book was born out of the author's conviction that more biographical preaching is needed and that it offers a real opportunity to younger ministers. With every chapter are titles, texts, and brief suggested outlines. The author gives repeated stress to the fact that every sermon should have as its ultimate concern the Kingdom of God. He has drawn widely from pulpit masters of past and present.—*Stiles Lessly, First Congregational, De Kalb, Ill.*

★★THE CHRISTIAN HOPE. By **T. A. Kantonen.** 114 pages. Muhlenberg, $1.50. This is a pre-Evanston book with a post-Evanston impact. Kantonen is a leading United Lutheran theologian who has depth, balance and originality. If Evanston left you cold, this book will warm your heart; if you are subject to eschatological hysteria, this book will bring down the temperature. In addition, chapter two is relevant to Easter preaching. There is solid biblical material plus full acquaintance with all the winds of doctrine, including some Finnish thinkers new to most of us. There are several sermon illustrations (a vivid one from Karl Heim on page 77), but the book is mainly theological and is aimed at the average pastor. Muhlenberg published a fine book but should be censured for leaving out an index. —*Don. E. Smucker, Bethany and Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Chicago.*

★UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLES OF OUR LORD, by **Albert E. Barnett.** 223 pages. Alec R. Allenson, $2.50. This instructive interpretation of the greatest stories of all time is well worth reprinting after 15 years. From a generation of experience in teaching teachers and preachers, Dr. Barnett has registered plainly and compactly the dominant intent of 42 parables of the Master Teacher. He sets forth the meaning of each parable for those who heard it first, and its relationship, if any, to the Old Testament and other parts of the New Testament.—*James V. Claypool, Secretary, American Bible Society, Chicago, Ill.*

TWO OR THREE TOGETHER, by **Harold W. Freer** and **Francis B. Hall.** 187 pages. Harper, $2.50. This manual is designed to help those forming new prayer groups. Part one presents the spiritual needs of the individual in modern society and shows how he can find strength and understanding through a prayer group. Part two contains usable meditations for 30 weeks of meetings. There is a valuable bibliography.—*Paul E. Turk, Euclid Avenue Methodist, Oak Park, Ill.*

(★★★★You can't afford to be without it; ★★★Unusually valuable to the preacher; ★★Above average in its field; ★A good buy; No Star, depends on your taste and need.)

Books Preachers Are Reading

December	January	This Month	An analysis based on reports from leading religious booksellers and from the reading of the Pulpit's distinguished editorial associates and book reviewers.
	3	1	**The Family Nobody Wanted.** *Helen Doss. Little, Brown,* $3.75
2	1	2	**Preaching.** *Walter Russell Bowie. Abingdon Press,* $2.75
8	4	3	**Like a Mighty Army.** *Halford E. Luccock. Oxford,* $2.50
1	2	4	**The Old Testament and the Fine Arts.** *Cynthia Maus. Harper,* $5.95
3	5	5	**This Do and Live.** *Roy M. Pearson. Abingdon Press,* $2.00
	6	6	**Horns and Halos in Human Nature.** *J. Wallace Hamilton. Revell,* $2.50
7	8	7	**Who Speaks for God.** *Gerald Kennedy. Abingdon Press,* $2.50
6	9	8	**Jeremiah.** *Elmer A. Leslie. Abingdon Press,* $4.75
		9	**Evanston: An Interpretation.** *James H. Nichols. Harper,* $2.00
		10	**Pastoral Preaching.** *David A. MacLennan. Westminster,* $2.50

The Editor's Page

A Frontier of Faith

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!
If I take the wings of the morning
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there thy hand shall lead me,
And thy right hand cover me. Psalm 139.

GOD IS NO MORE limited by space than he is conditioned by time. To the woman at the well Jesus said God was not to be localized in her Samaritan mountain, nor even in the Jewish city of Jerusalem, but "God is spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth."

This was very hard for the Samaritan woman to believe, and it is almost as difficult for us. Nevertheless the effort must be made. This, said Jesus, is the nature of God and it must be recognized for what it is. God is spirit. Any real worship of God must glory in his nature, must accept it and maintain it. "Spirit *and* truth"—the two go together.

Man is congenitally dependent upon length and breadth, height and depth. We find it difficult to think except in spatial terms. Even when we try to express abstract terms we place one over and the other under, or make one an inner and the other an outer manifestation. We talk of churches on the "local level," or the "national level," as if the nation were elevated above its component parts. So when we try to grasp an idea of God we visualize him in relation to a point in space. We think of him "in heaven,"—which is vaguely located somewhere in the physical universe—or in church, or in a shrine, or in a favored place.

I

This is a spatial illusion. The author of the 139th Psalm knew better. He observed that space does not condition God. Even if we go from the highest height to the lowest depth and then to the outermost boundaries of our universe, he said, it is as though we had never moved. All that travel over space makes no difference. At the camp farthest out, at the remotest frontier, at the peak of Everest, the essential fact is just what it was at the point of departure: "Even there thy hand shall lead me."

Such knowledge is absolutely essential when we encounter the truth concerning the spaciousness of our universe. This knowledge is new. A decade ago astronomers seemed to think they approached the limits of the universe when their telescopes "saw" galaxies 1.4 billion light years away. Now greater instruments pick up gleams which started in our direction 2 billion years ago. Yet we know that while light was making that long journey at the rate of 186,282 miles per second, the galaxy from which it originated has continued its outward journey and is 3.3 billion light years away at the moment we discover its existence. The whole universe in which such frightening spaces can be measured is expanding. The remotest observable galaxies are traveling outward at two-thirds the speed of light.

Where is God in all this space? Has the Mount Palomar telescope located heaven? These instruments have much to teach us concerning beauty and order, concerning forces and law, and these things are consistent with the existence of God. But they do not locate the dwelling place of the Almighty in the physical universe, nor will they. Electric microscopes which probe the inmost complexities of matter also reveal marvelous manifestations of the Creator's work, but they show only his handicrafts, never his hands.

II

Where then is God? "Neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem." At no place in space. At no place outside of space. At no place! God is not conditioned by boundaries, by dimensions, by locations, as we are. On the other hand, he is not conditioned by lack of these adjuncts so necessary to our earthly existence. The fact we cannot "pinpoint" God in space does not constitute proof he does not exist. The Creator is of another order. "God is spirit."

"God was in Christ." The whole burden of the Bible is found in those words. God is to be found in the living Christ today, and in those who believe in him. The heavens bear awe-inspiring witness to him, and the order within the atom testifies that his thoughts are so high we cannot attain unto them. But we see him as he really is in Christ. We discern his purposes in the Scriptures, and know his leading in the fellowship of the faithful, in the church of the spirit. The fact God is not conditioned by space holds promise that we too may hope for liberation from its constraints.

One immediate effect of this line of reflection can be to lift the fear which has been growing that man may misuse his new knowledge concerning nuclear energy and end human existence on our planet. The astronomers witness events in outer space which would indicate that even suns can explode. Perhaps that may happen here, so we must bend every resource to prevent another war, which might mean universal annihilation. But even if we take the wings of the morning and never see another sunset, faith can stand on the frontier where space and time meet and declare: "Even there thy hand shall lead me."

Harold E. Fey.

For the Record—

AST month I tried, in this space, to tell readers of The Pulpit of e contribution which Alton M. Mot- r has made as the paper's managing itor—a position he was relinquish- g with that number. Now I am ked to introduce his successor as anaging editor, the Rev. Theodore Gill, Th.D.

Readers of the *Christian Century*, no are just now welcoming Dr. Gill a position as one of its associate itors, have become familiar with his illiant journalistic abilities through series of "editorial correspondence" ters he has contributed to that eekly during recent months. They so saw his initials at the bottom many of the reports in the *Century* om last summer's Evanston assem- y of the World Council of Churches.

Readers of The Pulpit have had wer opportunities to get to know e new managing editor. The sermon, Christmas-in-Particular," which he ntributed to the December number, ust have told every reader that *here* a preacher. At my suggestion, this ocess of introduction will be con- nued in this and the next and the pril numbers by presentation of a ries of Lenten sermons by Dr. Gill.

What will readers of The Pulpit ant to know about Dr. Gill? Where as he born? Minnesota. When? 1920. here was he educated? In the public hools of his native state and Wis- nsin; at the University of Wiscon- n; at Princeton Theological Semi- ary; then in postgraduate study at nion, at Basle (Switzerland) and Zurich. His doctorate comes from e last-named university, where he orked under Brunner and wrote one the most informative and readable ctoral dissertations I have recently ad on the similarities and differ- nces in the political ideas of Barth, runner and Reinhold Niebuhr. It has en published only in England; why me American publishing house has t snapped it up I cannot imagine.

Has he had any experience as a orking pastor? Yes, first as assist- nt, then as acting pastor of the orth Avenue Presbyterian Church New Rochelle, N.Y.; later as min- ter of the West End Presbyterian hurch in New York city. More re- ntly his pastoral experience has en of another kind—he has been an of the chapel and chairman of e department of religion at Linden- ood College, the Presbyterian college r women in St. Charles, Mo., a St. ouis suburb. And with this bit of troduction, I leave Dr. Gill to make s own impact on this paper.

P.H.

The Pulpit

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